



THE MARYLAND MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

The Association of Cities and Towns

PRESS RELEASE

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Maryland Municipal League Approves 2025 General Assembly Priorities

(September 17, 2024) Annapolis, Md. – The [Maryland Municipal League](#) (MML) Board of Directors, which represents 160 local governments in Maryland, held its annual Board retreat in the Maryland State House, and unanimously approved two legislative priorities for the upcoming 2025 Maryland legislative session. MML advocacy efforts will focus on championing pedestrian safety within municipal boundaries and expanding local revenue growth opportunities.

1. Allowing trained staff to review speed camera citations.

Automated traffic enforcement has repeatedly been proven to change driver behavior. Red-light cameras work. Speed cameras work. While any jurisdiction in Maryland can administer a red-light camera program and use trained staff to certify violations under current law, the same code then requires speed camera violations to be signed by a sworn law enforcement officer. Since less than 55% of Maryland's cities, towns and villages have an independent police department, this framework creates sizeable gaps throughout the state leaving a high number of sensitive pedestrian zones, such as elementary schools, without enforcement protection.

The League priority seeks to authorize municipalities to utilize trained employees to review and certify speed camera citations, similar to the Maryland red-light enforcement program. Furthermore, recognizing the current challenges with police officer retention and recruitment being faced across the country and here in Maryland, this solution would allow officers to focus on community policing and other pressing areas.

“This is not a complicated process or one that actually requires unique police training beyond vendor instructions, much like how the red-light camera process in Maryland operates, which is already in statute,” said City of Frederick Mayor and MML President, Michael O’Connor. “There’s no reason this issue should remain a barrier to protecting kids walking to school or playing at home in their own municipal neighborhoods. Enforcement has been proven to change bad driver behavior and at the end of the day, we all strive for safer communities.”

2. Expanding revenue opportunities within the Amusement and Admissions structure

Municipal governments are responsible for providing everyday essential services to 25% of the state's residents, roughly two million Marylanders, yet are limited in their ability to raise the required revenue needed to fund those services. Maryland's 160 cities, towns and villages are forced to rely on property tax revenues to supplement existing programs and new challenges, such as the ever-growing effects of climate change and combatting cybersecurity threats. For example, data shows many local jurisdictions must utilize general revenue funds to support highway funding shortages. Given the existing housing supply ecosystem and increased dependency on housing valuations for local governments, it is a difficult conversation to balance



when fiscal impacts land solely on local residents. The current revenue structure was not designed to handle the modern responsibilities and complexities of local government.

Authorizing an enabling local fee under the Admissions and Amusement statute would allow municipal governments to hold local public hearings and assess the viability for each unique jurisdiction. The proposed 2% local food and beverage fee is significantly less regressive than continuing to increase property tax rates and is in line with neighboring states like Virginia, with up to 7.5% authority, and the District of Columbia, which sits at 10%. This would limit the revenue burden being placed on Marylanders, as out of state visitors would also then contribute to supporting the cost of services used under this model.

“Maryland’s cities and towns are being asked to solve modern challenges with an antiquated revenue structure,” said MML Chief Executive Officer, Theresa Kuhns. “It has been over 55 years since we’ve added a significant revenue source for local governments and Marylanders are feeling it on their property tax bill. And we recognize potential first-time homeowners, future state residents and companies are looking elsewhere, which directly influences our states economic growth and the ability to close the equity wealth gap with homeownership. This is a responsible and competitive solution.””

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About The Maryland Municipal League:

The Maryland Municipal League (MML) was founded in 1936 and serves as the collective voice of 160 municipal governments and the 2 million Marylanders it represents. A voluntary, non-profit, nonpartisan association controlled and maintained by city and town governments, MML works to strengthen and support municipal government through advocacy and the development of effective leadership. Through its membership in the National League of Cities MML offers legislative representation in Washington, urban research programs, and a national municipal government information exchange. MML is the only statewide organization in Maryland composed solely of municipal officials and devoted to the promotion of all branches of municipal administration.