

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2009 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 492 (Delegate Carr, *et al.*)
Environmental Matters

Commission on Commuter Rail Governance and Funding

This bill establishes a Commission on Commuter Rail Governance and Funding. The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and Department of Budget and Management must provide staff support for the commission. The commission must submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by January 1, 2010.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2009, and terminates June 30, 2010.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Given the State's fiscal difficulties, agency budgets have been constrained. Thus, the requirement to staff the commission is not absorbable within the existing budgeted resources of MDOT. Instead, Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) expenditures increase in FY 2010, primarily for contractual staff to support the commission. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: To the extent possible, the commission must encompass regional, economic, ethnic, and gender diversity and include members who possess expertise in transportation policy and finances. Membership has to include representatives from Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia, and Washington, DC. The commission is tasked with

examining commuter rail needs in the State and region and with receiving input from commuter rail users, other members of the public, and consultants on the condition of mass transit and commuter rail in the State and region.

Generally, the commission's report must include the following information:

- a comparison of the governance structure and experience of entities in the State that provide commuter rail service to the governance structure, experience, and best practices of similar entities in the United States and in other countries;
- options on how best to implement and deliver commuter rail service within Maryland and the region;
- the magnitude of system preservation and unmet commuter rail needs;
- the level of funding necessary to support a viable commuter rail system; and
- development of a comprehensive, long-term revenue source for commuter rail.

Members of the commission may not receive compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations.

Background: The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) is the eleventh largest transit system in the United States, based on unlinked passenger miles. In fiscal 2007, MTA provided over 96 million trips and its annual ridership totaled 13.2 million for Metro subway, 7.5 million for Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) train, and 7.1 million for light rail. MTA had an operating budget of \$556.6 million in fiscal 2008.

MTA operates within the four program areas described below.

- Transit Administration – Provides executive direction and support services for MTA.
- Bus Operations – Manages bus services in Baltimore City and surrounding counties, including operation of fixed route and paratransit lines and contracts with commuter and paratransit service providers.
- Rail Operations – Operates the Baltimore Metro heavy rail line and the Baltimore area light rail lines and manages MARC contracts with Amtrak and CSX Transportation.
- Statewide Operations – Provides technical assistance and operating grants to local jurisdictions' transit services; contracts with private carriers to operate commuter bus services throughout the State; and assists several short-line freight railroads to support the maintenance of State-owned rail lines.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 723 (Senator Madaleno) - Budget and Taxation.

Information Source(s): Department of Budget and Management, Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 15, 2009
mcp/ljm

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