

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2011 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 223 (Delegate Carter, *et al.*)  
Health and Government Operations

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State Government - Commemorative Days - Earth Hour

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This emergency bill requires the Governor to annually issue an order, in observance of Earth Hour, which requires the lights of the Government House and the State House to be turned off on the last Saturday in March at 8:30 p.m. and to remain off for one hour.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** Commemorating Earth Hour does not affect State finances. Any decrease in expenditures from shutting the lights down in the Government House and the State House would be negligible.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** Eight official commemorative days and three months are recognized in State law as shown in **Exhibit 1**. The Governor also must issue a proclamation each year encouraging citizens and other individuals to observe a moment of silence at 3 p.m. on Memorial Day to unite in remembrance and commemorate the heroic acts and efforts of Marylanders who have served and died in the U.S. armed forces.

**Background:** Earth Hour is the World Wildlife Fund's global initiative in which individuals, schools, organizations, businesses, and governments turn off their lights for one hour to cast a vote in favor of action on climate change. By voting with their light switches, Earth Hour participants send a visual message demanding action be taken to combat climate change.

In 2010, more than 4,500 cities in 128 countries participated in Earth Hour. In the United States, an estimated 90 million Americans participated. Iconic landmarks around the world participated in Earth Hour including the Las Vegas Strip, Mount Rushmore, and the Empire State Building. The next Earth Hour is scheduled for March 26, 2011.

**Additional Comments:** The last Saturday in March is “crossover weekend,” the weekend before the crossover deadline by which each chamber must send to the opposite chamber bills it wishes to pass. It is likely both chambers will be in session crossover weekend. Whether they meet into the evening is unknown.

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### **Exhibit 1**

#### **Official Commemorative Days and Months in Maryland**

Asian Lunar New Year Day <sup>1</sup>	January/February
Black History Month	February
Women’s History Month	March
John Hanson’s Birthday <sup>2</sup>	April 13
Negro Baseball League Day <sup>3</sup>	May
Law Day	May 1
Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Services Workers Day <sup>4</sup>	June
Maryland Charter Day	June 20
Hispanic Heritage Month <sup>5</sup>	September/October
Poetry Day	October 15
Annapolis Charter Day	December 17

<sup>1</sup>Day designated as new year on the Asian lunar calendar.

<sup>2</sup>John Hanson served as the first president of the Continental Congress under the Articles of Confederation from 1781 to 1782.

<sup>3</sup>Commemorated on the second Saturday in May.

<sup>4</sup>Commemorated on the first Sunday in June.

<sup>5</sup>Commemorated from September 15 to October 15.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** HB 1045 of 2010 received an unfavorable report from the House Health and Government Operations Committee.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** World Wildlife Fund, Department of Budget and Management, Governor's Office, Department of General Services, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 9, 2011  
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