

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 1427 (Delegate La Vay)
Commerce and Government Matters

Agency Forms - Public Access Through the Internet

The bill requires every State department or independent unit of government with a home page on the Internet to provide access to the department's forms which are intended for public use and allow the downloading of the forms for no charge. Each department and independent unit must have a home page on the Internet that allows the downloading of forms intended for the public use without charge by January 1, 1998.

The bill is effective on July 1, 1997.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Indeterminate. General fund expenditures could increase significantly as discussed below. General fund expenditures could decrease in the out-years. Revenues would not be affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal impact on small businesses that access State department or independent unit forms as a part of doing business, to the extent the bill makes public forms more accessible.

Fiscal Analysis

State Expenditures: The Department of Budget and Management (DBM), which oversees expenditures for all information technology systems for State agencies, advises that making public forms able to be accessed and downloaded at no cost to a member of the public who can access the State department's or independent unit's home page, and insuring that every State department and independent unit has a home page with accessible forms for

downloading at no cost, would require an estimated \$1.39 million increase in expenditures in fiscal 1998. DBM advises that many State departments and independent units will require additional personnel, equipment and programming time to convert paper forms to electronic format. Their estimate is based on an average installation at 30 agencies. This estimate includes 30 full-time programmers, fringe benefits, and contractual services. In the out-years agencies are assumed to begin to realize a limited decrease in expenditures as a result of the reduced supply costs for paper forms and operating efficiencies.

The Department of Fiscal Services (DFS) advises that although all State departments currently have web sites, it is difficult to precisely quantify the bill's effect on State expenditures. DFS advises that the increase may be significant given the bill's effective date, although it is unlikely that the level of staffing suggested by DBM would be necessary given the minimal level of resources required to add accessible forms to agency web sites. Also, the operating efficiencies created by agency forms accessible over the Internet may significantly reduce expenditures for agencies, depending upon the number of forms available and the amount of resources currently dedicated to providing forms to the public.

It should be noted that many State departments such as the Secretary of State, Department of Natural Resources, and the Comptroller of the Treasury already have public forms accessible via their Internet site and many others such as the Motor Vehicle Administration and Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation are working toward making public forms accessible from their home pages.

Information Source(s): Comptroller of the Treasury; Department of Budget and Management; Department of Business and Economic Development; Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation

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Analysis by: Shelley Finlayson

Reviewed by: John Rixey

Direct Inquiries to:

John Rixey, Coordinating Analyst

(410) 841-3710

(301) 858-3710