

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2005 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 963
Economic Matters

(Delegates Jameson and Walkup)

Finance

Task Force on Broadband Communications Deployment in Underserved Rural Areas - Extension

This bill extends the deadline, from June 30, 2005 to June 30, 2006, by which the Task Force on Broadband Communications Deployment in Underserved Rural Areas must present its final report. The bill also extends the termination date for Chapter 320 of 2003, which established the task force, from June 30, 2005 to June 30, 2006.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2005.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Staffing requirements to prepare the task force's final report could be handled with existing resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The task force is charged with: (1) considering developments and best practices in regions of the country where broadband communications are being deployed for rural communities; (2) evaluating the resources and infrastructure available in Maryland's rural areas; (3) encouraging the development of goals to deploy broadband communications in those areas; (4) developing proposals and recommendations for the

establishment and enhancement of broadband communications in rural areas; and (5) overseeing the implementation of the recommendations.

The Maryland Technology Development Corporation must provide staff for the task force, with the assistance of the Rural Maryland Council, the Department of Budget and Management, the Department of Business and Economic Development, and other appropriate State, regional, and local agencies.

The task force is required to present its final report by June 30, 2005.

Background: In addition to the final report, Chapter 320 required the task force to produce preliminary reports before the final report, including a draft plan to provide public and private broadband access by December 1, 2003 and a progress report on the implementation of the plan by December 1, 2004. The task force issued an interim report on March 15, 2004.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 454 (Senator Pipkin, *et al.*) – Finance.

Information Source(s): Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 24, 2005
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Analysis by: T. Ryan Wilson

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510