

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2013 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 1352 (Delegate Carter, *et al.*)
Health and Government Operations

State Government - Commemorative Days - Earth Hour

This emergency bill requires, except under specified circumstances, the Governor to annually issue an order, in observance of Earth Hour, that requires the lights in 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. The Governor is not required to issue an order if emergency circumstances exist that make issuing the order ill-advised. The order issued may not require the lights of the State House to be turned off if either House of the General Assembly has convened a session in the chamber of the House.

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 are negligible.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Nine 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.

Exhibit 1
Official Commemorative Days and Months in Maryland

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

¹Day designated as new year on the Asian lunar calendar.

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

³Commemorated on the second Saturday in May.

⁴Commemorated on the first Sunday in June.

⁵Commemorated from September 15 to October 15.

Source: Department of Legislative Services

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 2012, more than 7,000 cities in 152 countries participated in Earth Hour. In the United States, an estimated 90 million Americans participated in Earth Hour 2010. Iconic landmarks around the world participated in Earth Hour 2010 including the Las Vegas Strip, Mount Rushmore, and the Empire State Building. The next Earth Hour is scheduled for March 23, 2013; however, the last Saturday of March in 2013 will be March 30, 2013.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: Similar legislation, HB 223 of 2011 and HB 1045 of 2010, received unfavorable reports from the House Health and Government Operations Committee.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of General Services, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 15, 2013
mc/lgc

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