

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2014 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 872 (Delegate George)
 Environmental Matters

Public Ethics Laws - Meals - Regulated Lobbyist Reporting Requirements

This bill requires a regulated lobbyist that invites members of a standing committee of the General Assembly or a recognized county or regional delegation of members of the General Assembly to a meal during the legislative session to file, on or before June 30 of each year, a report disclosing the name of each member who consumed food and beverages at the meal, the date and value of the meal, and the identity of any person or entity to which the value of the food and beverages consumed at the meal is attributable. A member who paid for the cost of the food and beverages consumed at the meal, however, may not be included in the report.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Special fund expenditures increase by \$10,000 in FY 2015 only to incorporate an additional report in the State Ethics Commission’s electronic filing system and online training program. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SF Expenditure	10,000	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$10,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate effect

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: A “regulated lobbyist” is a person or entity required under the Maryland Public Ethics Law to register with the State Ethics Commission because the person or entity generally has made certain expenditures and/or received certain compensation to influence legislative or executive action.

Regulated lobbyists are subject to various specified reporting requirements under the Maryland Public Ethics Law with respect to gifts to or for government officials, employees, and/or members of the immediate families of officials or employees, including food and beverages.

When a regulated lobbyist invites all members of a legislative unit (defined as the General Assembly, either house of the General Assembly, a standing committee of the General Assembly, or a recognized county or regional delegation of members of the General Assembly) to a meal or reception, at least five days prior to the meal or reception, the lobbyist must extend a written invitation to all members of the legislative unit and register the meal or reception with the Department of Legislative Services (DLS). DLS publishes a weekly list of such meals and receptions. The regulated lobbyist must report the total cost of the meal or reception, including the identity of any sponsor who contributes to the cost and the amount of the contribution, to the State Ethics Commission within 14 days after the date of the meal or reception.

State Expenditures: Special fund expenditures increase by \$10,000 in fiscal 2015 for consultant services to incorporate an additional lobbyist report in the State Ethics Commission’s existing electronic filing system and online training program. State Ethics Commission staff is unable to make the changes without the assistance of professional consultants.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: SB 665 of 2013 received an unfavorable report from the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee. SB 717 of 2012 was heard by the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, but no further action was taken. SB 536 of 2011 was heard by the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, but no further action was taken.

Cross File: SB 422 (Senator Kittleman) - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

Information Source(s): State Ethics Commission, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 13, 2014
ncs/kdm

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