

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2017 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 620 (Delegate Hornberger, *et al.*)
Health and Government Operations

State Government - Toll-Free Calling to Units - Repeal

This bill repeals the requirement that each unit of State government install and maintain a toll-free number for incoming calls. The bill also makes conforming changes to provisions in State law requiring each unit to print its toll-free telephone numbers on official documents and informational directories.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) expenditures for the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) decrease by \$75,200 in FY 2018 and by \$100,200 annually thereafter due to cost savings from the discontinuation of its toll-free numbers in its call center; this savings could be less depending on costs to reprint various publications. General/special fund expenditures for other State agencies may decrease to the extent that units discontinue toll-free numbers, though some State agencies may elect to retain their toll-free numbers as a convenience to users. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: The bill does not directly affect local government operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Each unit of State government must install and maintain a telephone system that allows a person from anywhere in the State to communicate with employees of the unit by toll-free telephone call to conduct official business during regular business hours. Each unit must print its toll-free telephone numbers on official documents, including stationary, fax cover sheets, business cards, and other publications that are distributed to the public.

Toll-free numbers must also be included in any directory that lists information about the unit.

Background: According to the Federal Communications Commission, toll-free numbers are numbers that begin with one of the following three-digit codes: 800, 888, 877, 866, 855, or 844. Toll-free numbers allow callers to reach businesses and/or individuals without being charged for the call. The charge for using a toll-free number is paid by the called party (the toll-free subscriber) instead of the calling party. A Teletypewriter or TTY is a machine that prints written messages that have been sent using a telephone system. TTY telephone lines are equipped to receive and transmit via TTY.

State Expenditures: The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) advises that MVA has two TTY lines, one regular and one toll-free; should MVA remove the toll-free TTY line, the regular TTY line would remain functional. TTF expenditures are anticipated to decrease by \$100,201 annually by discontinuing the toll-free line. Due to the bill's effective date, TTF expenditures decrease by \$75,150 in fiscal 2018. MDOT advises that its other modes are likely to retain their toll-free numbers.

Other State agencies could incur minimal to significant cost savings (depending on the scope of their toll-free line usage) to the extent that they terminate their toll-free numbers.

Any State agencies that choose to discontinue their toll-free numbers as a result of the bill likely incur costs to reprint publications and informational directories. However, it is assumed that any savings resulting from the bill is likely greater than any such printing costs.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): University System of Maryland; Department of General Services; Maryland Department of Transportation; Federal Communications Commission; Department of Legislative Services

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md/mcr

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