

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2018 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 34
Finance

(Senator Reilly)

**Chesapeake Bay Bridge Crossing - Eastern Shore Local Government Consent -
Repeal**

This bill exempts a State agency from the requirement that it receive express consent from a majority of the governments of the affected Eastern Shore counties before it constructs a toll road, toll highway, or toll bridge in those counties if the road, highway, or bridge crosses the Chesapeake Bay.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill does not materially affect State operations or finances.

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

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: A State agency, including the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA), must get the approval of the majority of affected governments to construct a toll road, toll highway, or toll bridge in Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester counties.

Background: The Chesapeake Bay Bridge is the only toll bridge that currently crosses the Chesapeake Bay. The bridge connects Maryland's Eastern Shore recreational regions with the metropolitan areas of Baltimore, Annapolis, and the District of Columbia. The original two-lane bridge was constructed in 1952, and the second three-lane bridge was constructed in 1973. MDTA, which maintains and operates the bridge, estimates that about

25.6 million vehicles crossed the bridge in fiscal 2014. Traffic congestion on the bridge can be severe.

The 2015 [Bay Bridge Life Cycle Cost Analysis](#) estimates that, by 2040, average traffic on the bridge will increase by at least 31.3% (to 92,800 vehicles per day). Furthermore, on summer Fridays (one of the heaviest traffic days for the bridge), traffic volume is estimated to increase by at least 36.6% by 2040 (to 94,300 vehicles).

The analysis also researched and developed alternatives designed to improve the Bay Bridge and its approaching roadways. The analysis includes a cost estimate of \$3.25 billion to simply repair and maintain the bridge in its existing form through 2065, as well as a range of alternatives that involve building a third bridge across the bay, demolishing one or both existing bridges to rebuild with additional travel lanes, and widening the U.S. 50/301 main line by one lane. Costs for the alternatives are estimated through 2060 and range from \$7.80 billion (which simply widens and rehabilitates the existing eastbound bridge to three lanes) to \$25.34 billion (which demolishes both existing structures to rebuild a new, single, eight-lane bridge).

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Transportation; Queen Anne's County; Department of Legislative Services

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mm/lgc

Analysis by: Richard L. Duncan

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