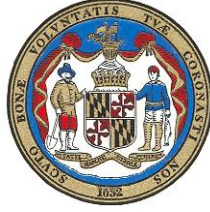


HB 918 - STO Testimony for B&T.pdf

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MARYLAND STATE TREASURER
Dereck E. Davis

Testimony of the Maryland State Treasurer’s Office

House Bill 918: State Treasurer - Membership Responsibilities

Position: Favorable with Amendments

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

March 26, 2024

House Bill 918 is similar to Senate Bill 777, which unanimously passed the Committee and the full Senate. As noted previously, the bill recognizes a reality that the State Treasurer’s Office (STO) has faced in recent years – constrained resources. In addition to fulfilling various Constitutional and statutory responsibilities related to banking, debt management, and insurance, the Treasurer serves on 23 State boards and commissions. This session, the General Assembly is considering legislation to add the Treasurer to several additional entities. As an agency, STO is undertaking various modernization efforts to improve operations. For the reasons discussed below, STO respectfully requests a favorable with amendments report on House Bill 918, which will remove obligations related to several of those boards.

Expanding Portfolio

[Chapter 113](#) of the Acts of 2023 abolished the Maryland 529 Board, transferring the Maryland 529 Program under STO. That transfer, coupled with the staff resources that STO is dedicating to integrating the agency and addressing the Program’s issues, significantly added to STO’s workload. While STO has resolved many of the initial operational challenges, the Treasurer remains the sole Trustee under the three active savings plans, requiring much more time than STO had previously dedicated to supporting the Treasurer as a member of the Maryland 529 Board.

Limited Staff Resources

Only a handful of STO employees have the experience and capacity to serve as designees for the Treasurer. Meeting obligations vary from bimonthly to periodically every few years (see “State Treasurer’s Board Responsibilities” chart below). Aside from official meetings, several of the boards require STO to expend a substantial amount of staff resources in between meetings to coordinate briefings with other agencies and public officials, collect background information, and prepare for votes and discussion. The Treasurer’s two most time-consuming board responsibilities are the Board of Trustees of the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System, for which the Treasurer serves as Chair, and the Board of Public Works.

For illustrative purposes, one employee serves as the Treasurer’s Liaison to the Board of Public Works – itself a full-time job and one that is shared by multiple staff in one of the other member’s offices. In addition to BPW-related responsibilities, the staff person serves as the Treasurer’s designee for the Board of Directors for the Maryland Environmental Service (MES Board), the Board of Trustees for the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF Board), and one other board that is not affected by the bill. STO estimates that, in terms of meetings and preparation, the staff person dedicates approximately 7 hours per month to the MES Board and 11 hours per month to MALPF Board. This is in addition to the time that the Treasurer spends attending the meetings or receiving updates from the staff person. Removal of the Treasurer and his designee from these two boards will allow this staff person to dedicate approximately two and a half days of working time each month to other responsibilities.

Nexus to STO’s Core Responsibilities

This interim, STO undertook a review of the Treasurer’s board commitments to identify those that reflected the weakest nexus to the Office’s core responsibilities. After much consideration, STO determined that the four boards included in House Bill 918 had the least strong connection to the Office’s other work. Removing obligations related to the Maryland Commission on Climate Change, the MES Board, the Coast Smart Council, and the MALPF Board will allow the Treasurer and staff to focus on other mission-critical responsibilities. Passage of House Bill 918 will also help to offset the new responsibilities that the Treasurer and STO gained with the Maryland 529 transfer.

Related Legislation

STO notes for the Committee’s consideration that House Bill 918 is in a different posture than [Senate Bill 777](#). Under House Bill 918, the Treasurer remains on the MES Board, and the quorum requirements for the MES Board are unchanged. Aside from a difference in the purpose paragraphs, both versions of the bill are otherwise identical, removing the

Treasurer from the remaining three boards and adding the Comptroller to the Maryland Commission on Climate Change and the Coast Smart Council.

In addition, separate legislation makes changes to two of the boards referenced in Senate Bill 777.

- [Senate Bill 293](#), assigned to the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, alters a quorum requirement for the MES Board, among other changes. The full House of Delegates has already passed the crossfile, [House Bill 78](#), and removed the quorum change from the bill.
- [Senate Bill 337](#) alters the membership of the Maryland Commission on Climate Change. As passed by the Senate, the bill is identical to [House Bill 323](#) as passed by the House.

STO would be happy to facilitate discussions between this Committee and other committees or assist in any other way to ensure conformity across the bills.

For the foregoing reasons, STO requests that the Committee give House Bill 918 a favorable with amendments report to conform the bill to Senate Bill 777. Please contact Laura Atas, Deputy Treasurer for Public Policy (latas@treasurer.state.md.us), with any questions.

State Treasurer's Board Responsibilities

Board of Public Works	Bi-monthly
Capital Debt Affordability Committee	October (3 meetings)
Commission on State Debt	April
Board of Trustees of the Maryland State Retirement and Pension Systems	Monthly
Board of Revenue Estimates	March, September, December
Maryland Environmental Services Board	Monthly
Maryland Supplemental Retirement Board	Monthly
Maryland Small Business Retirement Savings Board	Quarterly
Maryland Health and Higher Education Facilities Authority	Monthly
Maryland Commission on Climate Change	Quarterly
Maryland Coast Smart Council	Quarterly
Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation Board	Monthly
Maryland Green Purchasing Committee	Quarterly
Maryland Efficient Grant Application Council	Quarterly
Financial Education and Capability Commission	Required to meet at least twice yearly
Procurement Improvement Council	Quarterly
IWIF Board	Quarterly
eMaryland Marketplace Advantage Steering Committee	As needed
Revenue Bond Advisory Board (DHCD)	Monthly
Revenue Monitoring Committee	Monthly
Hall of Records Commission	Semi-annually
Board of State Canvassers	Periodically during election years (After a presidential primary election, a State general election, or a general or special general election that includes a candidate for Congress)
Governor's Salary Commission	Periodically every four years