



Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

HEARING DATE: January 25, 2024
BILL NO: SB0295
COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
POSITION: Support
FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Andrew Wilson (443) 366-4224

TITLE: Department of Planning - Inventory Responsibilities

BILL ANALYSIS:

The bill repeals a requirement for the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) to prepare and periodically revise inventory lists of Maryland's natural resources and of major public works and private facilities that are important to Maryland's development as a whole.

POSITION AND RATIONALE:

The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) supports SB0295. The bill recognizes that responsibilities have shifted from MDP to other state agencies for developing and updating the inventory lists and that instead of inventory lists, agencies now create or use geospatial databases. Some of these databases are online tools that make use of publicly available online geospatial data from Maryland's Open Data Portal.

Although MDP creates and maintains its own geospatial databases, such as for statewide generalized zoning, it does not need to replicate the work completed by other state agencies that specialize in natural resource management or in infrastructure and community facilities.

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), along with various federal agencies, have created a wide variety of geospatial databases covering many types of natural resources (e.g., streams, watersheds, threatened and endangered species, wetlands, forests). Much of the data from these geodatabases can be found on the DNR and MDE websites.

Similarly, the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) has the most complete type of geodatabase for transportation infrastructure in the state while the DNR Power Plant and Research Program (PPRP) has a geodatabase regarding renewable energy facilities. The Maryland Department of Commerce provides online access to geospatial data for power plants, hospitals and post-secondary education facilities. The Department of Budget and Management annually updates this 24 year summary (1999-2023) of all State-owned and non-State owned capital improvement projects and programs that are authorized by the General Assembly, except for those of the Department of Transportation, which is posted on DBM's Capital Budget webpage. DBM's Office of Capital Budget encourages facilities master planning by State agencies and provides technical assistance to State agencies preparing facilities master plans and capital project proposals.