

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 818 (The President)  
(Administration)

Judicial Proceedings

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Public Safety - State Commission on Public Safety Technology - Information  
Management

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This Administration bill creates a 23-member State Commission on Public Safety Technology.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2000.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** Potential general fund expenditure increase of less than \$150,000 for administrative costs in FY 2001. However, additional funding for various unknown commission projects may be required in FY 2001 and beyond. Revenues would not be affected.

**Local Effect:** Any expense reimbursements for commission members who represent units of local government are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within the budgeted resources of the commission, the Office of the Governor, or the participating local government.

**Small Business Effect:** A small business impact statement was not provided by the Administration in time for inclusion in this fiscal note. A revised fiscal note will be issued when the Administration's assessment becomes available.

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## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** This bill creates a 23-member State Commission on Public Safety Technology with delineated duties and responsibilities, including the development of a statewide public safety technology strategy to be updated annually. The bill also specifically requires the commission to adopt regulations, standards, procedures, and protocols necessary for the compatibility and interoperability of communication and information management systems maintained by State, county, municipal, and public safety entities.

The chairman of the commission is required to appoint, with the approval of the Governor, an executive director to perform such duties as the commission may determine, and who must receive a salary as provided for in the State budget. The commission is also required to employ other staff, as necessary. The commission is required to make specified annual and ongoing reports to the General Assembly, the Department of Budget and Management, and the Administrative Office of the Courts.

**Current Law:** None applicable.

**Background:** The existing Maryland Information Technology Board consists of 25 members. The board's statutory responsibilities include the study of existing and emerging information and Internet technologies and the provision of advice and recommendations to the Chief of Information Technology and other State officials concerning the use and regulation of these technologies in Maryland. The board has no operating budget, *per se*, and conducts its affairs via the existing budgeted resources of its participating members. Under the oversight of the board, a Task Force on Public Safety Technology already exists to improve law enforcement and corrections technologies for State and local criminal and juvenile justice agencies.

In addition, the Governor's proposed budget for fiscal 2001 contains \$5 million in PAYGO funds to construct a statewide Public Safety Communications System to provide the State with a new, modern, wireless, higher band width 700 MHZ communications system. Existing infrastructure (buildings, radio towers, microwave radio links, and fiber optic communications systems) are scheduled for augmentation, repair, or replacement, as required. Existing system deficiencies will be corrected by constructing new infrastructure specifically designed to meet current and future communications systems requirements of State and participating local government agencies. The five-year capital cost for this project is \$27 million. The estimated total cost of the project with a life of approximately ten years is \$102 million.

**State Fiscal Effect:** The Governor's proposed budget for fiscal 2001 does not include funding for this commission. The Governor's Office has also not provided any information regarding funding for the commission. However, assuming annual administrative and general operating costs similar to those for the 27-member Council on Management and Productivity (including salaries and fringe benefits for an executive director and an administrator), general fund expenditures could increase by somewhat less than \$150,000. In addition, it is assumed that with the eventual development of a statewide strategy (and various regulations, standards, procedures, and protocols), there would be the need to provide additional funding. While it is not possible to reliably predict the exact nature of such initiatives, it is assumed that such costs could double the budgetary needs of the commission.

Any expense reimbursements for commission members are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within the budgeted resources of the commission, the Office of the Governor, or the participating members.

Because this bill is an initiative of the Administration, the Department of Legislative Services assumes that a fully-funded commission would supplant the Task Force on Public Safety Technology, already in place. However, exactly when this would occur, or how any existing resources currently associated with the task force might be transferred to the commission, is unclear from this bill or the Governor's current budget proposal.

Any potential efficiencies or savings that may accrue to State or local government public safety operations as a result of the workings of this commission cannot be readily identified or estimated, at this time.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** In 1999, two bills were introduced that would have created a Public Safety Technology Fund, to be administered by the Emergency Number Systems Board, for assisting counties and municipal corporations in updating public safety communications systems. SB 148 was not reported from the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. HB 176 received an unfavorable report from the House Judiciary Committee.

**Cross File:** HB 1265 (The Speaker) - Judiciary.

**Information Source(s):** Department of State Police, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 3, 2000

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