

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE
Revised

House Bill 209 (Delegate Brown)

Economic Matters

Electronic Commerce Disclosure Act

This bill requires a merchant engaging in electronic commerce to provide, on the merchant's web site and on a printed bill of sale, a telephone number and mailing address that a customer may use to contact the merchant for billing inquiries and billing complaints. A merchant of consumer goods engaging in electronic commerce must also display, on the merchant's web site, the merchant's return policy and who pays for shipping. The bill defines "merchant" as a person who, directly or indirectly, sells, leases, rents, or offers to make available to consumers any consumer goods, realty, or services. The bill does not apply to a person who engages in fewer than five electronic consumer transactions per month and receives less than \$500 gross profit from electronic commerce transactions per month.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Assuming that the Consumer Protection Division receives fewer than 50 complaints as a result of this bill, any additional workload would be handled with existing budgeted resources. Any cost recovery by the Attorney General resulting from actions brought under the unfair and deceptive trade practices provision cannot be quantified beforehand.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: By regulation, Maryland merchants are required to disclose their return and exchange policies, either on the sales receipt, by clearly visible sign, or by conspicuous label on the consumer goods. No provision of law requires a merchant engaging in electronic commerce to provide, on the merchant's web site, a telephone number, mailing address, or return policy.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Office of the Attorney General (Consumer Protection Division),
Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 11, 2000
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