

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2001 Session

FISCAL NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 341 (Senators Miller and Forehand)

Finance

Commerce and Government Matters

Virginia-Maryland-District of Columbia Joint Legislative Commission on
Interstate Transportation - Regional Transportation Authority Study

This bill requests the Virginia-Maryland-District of Columbia Joint Legislative Commission on Interstate Transportation to study the creation of a regional transportation authority. It must submit an interim report of its findings and recommendations to the legislatures and governors of Maryland and Virginia and the Mayor and Council of the District of Columbia, as well as the local government officials of the affected counties and municipal corporations, by December 1, 2001. A final report is due by December 1, 2002.

The bill is effective June 1, 2001.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any expense reimbursements for the additional commission members and costs related to the preparation of the study could be absorbed within existing resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The commission is asked to review, in consultation with county governments in the Washington, DC metropolitan area and the Maryland Department of Transportation, the following issues in its study:

- transportation project funding;
- transportation capacity and projected travel demands for all modes of travel by 2025 (including strategies to reduce demand);
- transit alternatives;
- Potomac River crossings;
- coordination of and compliance with land use policies;
- air pollution control policies;
- the organizational structures, powers, and responsibilities of a regional transportation authority; and
- other issues relevant to a regional transportation authority.

The bill also directs the Maryland House Speaker and the Senate President to discuss with their Virginia and District of Columbia counterparts the advisability of expanding the commission's membership to allow broader geographic representation.

Current Law: The Virginia-Maryland-District of Columbia Joint Legislative Commission on Interstate Transportation consists of 26 members, including 12 members of the Maryland General Assembly who were appointed by the Speaker and the President of the Senate. Three members of the commission serve on the Council of the District of Columbia (D.C. Council), ten members serve in the Virginia General Assembly, and one represents the Virginia Department of Transportation.

The Maryland commission members represent Prince George's, Montgomery, and Frederick counties and the Virginia commission members represent Northern Virginia. The commission was created by a legislative resolution in Virginia and the District of Columbia and by appointment in Maryland.

Background: In the 2000 session, the House Commerce and Government Matters Committee gave an unfavorable report to HJ 14, which would have created an interstate commission of legislators to increase coordination of transportation policies and develop recommendations to improve interstate transportation links. The Speaker and Senate President subsequently endorsed creation of the commission and appointed its Maryland members.

No regional transportation authority or regional funding mechanism currently exists. The Metropolitan Council of Governments (MCOG), a regional organization comprised of 17 local governments in the Washington metropolitan area, provides transportation policy guidance and information and provides a forum for policymaking. It does not have the authority to raise revenue, make binding decisions on local governments, or implement transportation projects. The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

(TPB), supported by MCOG, prepares a long-range regional transportation plan, as well as a six-year transportation improvement plan, that must be approved by the federal government for the participating regions to receive federal transportation aid.

Several types of regional transportation authorities operate in the U.S. The jurisdiction of such authorities vary, and can include regulatory, bond, and revenue raising authority. They are often created to coordinate local transportation projects to address regional traffic problems. For example, the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority, a governor-appointed entity, has broad authority over local land use and transportation planning and bond authority for mass transit and air quality projects. The regional authority in San Diego is elected by the citizenry and implements previously approved transportation projects.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 10 (Delegate Taylor, *et al.*) – Commerce and Government Matters.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Transportation, Metropolitan Council of Governments, Department of Legislative Services

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