

**Department of Legislative Services**

Maryland General Assembly

2002 Session

**FISCAL NOTE**

House Bill 1066

(Delegate Franchot)

Environmental Matters

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**Climate Change Task Force**

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This bill creates a ten-member Climate Change Task Force. The task force is charged with: (1) developing, in coordination with the Department of the Environment, a 2002 greenhouse gas inventory; (2) evaluating current greenhouse gas mitigation projects and programs run by the Maryland Departments of Transportation, Agriculture, Environment, and Natural Resources, the Governor's Office of Smart Growth, and the Maryland Energy Administration and identifying opportunities and prioritizing measures for greenhouse gas mitigation in each sector; (3) coordinating with the Energy Committee Chair of the Maryland Green Buildings Council on the council's efforts to develop a Climate Change Action Plan; and (4) recommending possible follow-up activities for a climate change advisory group. Members of the task force may not receive compensation for serving on the task force but are entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations. The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly by December 31, 2002. The Maryland Energy Administration, the Department of the Environment, and the Department of Natural Resources must provide staffing for the task force.

The task force takes effect on July 1, 2002.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for the Maryland Energy Administration, the Department of the Environment, and the Department of Natural Resources could be handled with existing budgeted resources.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## Analysis

**Current Law:** No such task force exists.

**Background:** According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), over the last century, the average temperature in College Park has increased 2.4°F, and precipitation has increased by up to 10% in many parts of the State. The EPA further reports that over the next century, Maryland's climate may change even more. For example, by 2100, temperatures in Maryland could increase by 3°F (with a range of 1-7°F) in spring and 4°F (with a range of 2-9°F) in the other seasons. Precipitation is projected to increase by 20% (with a range of 10-40%) in all seasons, probably slightly less in spring and fall and slightly more in winter.

This anticipated climate change is directly linked to human activities that are altering the chemical composition of the atmosphere through the buildup of greenhouse gases (GHG) -- primarily carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide. Certain GHGs occur naturally in the atmosphere, while others result from human activities. Naturally occurring greenhouse gases include water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and ozone. Very powerful greenhouse gases that are not naturally occurring include hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF<sub>6</sub>), which are generated in a variety of industrial processes.

Each GHG differs in its ability to absorb heat in the atmosphere. HFCs and PFCs are the most heat-absorbent. Methane traps over 21 times more heat per molecule than carbon dioxide, and nitrous oxide absorbs 270 times more heat per molecule than carbon dioxide.

Many states have developed their own GHG inventories, in partnership with EPA's State and Local Climate Change Program. Each inventory identifies the major sources of GHG emissions and presents annual emissions by sector (e.g., energy, agriculture, waste), by source (e.g., transportation emissions, manure management), and by gas (e.g., carbon dioxide, methane). According to EPA, 34 states and Puerto Rico have completed inventories; another two states (including Maryland) have inventories in progress. Each inventory identifies the major sources of GHG emissions and creates a baseline upon which reduction strategies are based.

States use their inventories to develop state climate change action plans to reduce their GHG emissions. A state climate change action plan is a document that describes how a

state can reduce its GHG emissions, and the potential impact of that reduction. According to the EPA, as of May 2001, 25 states and Puerto Rico have initiated state action plans and 19 have completed them.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Department of the Environment, Maryland Energy Administration, Department of Legislative Services

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