

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2002 Session

FISCAL NOTE  
Revised

House Bill 1376

(Delegate McClenahan, *et al.*)

Commerce and Government Matters

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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Somerset County and St. Mary's County - Ferry Companies - Franchises

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This bill authorizes the county commissioners of Somerset and St. Mary's counties to grant, after reviewing the proposed business or financial plan, one or more franchises for a ferry company to operate between Somerset and St. Mary's counties and between Somerset County and Reedville, Virginia on an exclusive or nonexclusive basis notwithstanding any anticompetitive effect. The bill also: (1) authorizes the county commissioners of Somerset and St. Mary's counties to adopt regulations, including fees and rates, regarding ferry services; and (2) prohibits a franchise from conducting gambling or gaming activities on any ferry it operates under the franchise agreement.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** None.

**Local Effect:** Authorizing the county commissioners of Somerset and St. Mary's counties to grant one or more franchises for a ferry company would not directly affect the counties' finances.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** There is no provision of law authorizing Somerset and St. Mary's counties to grant one or more franchises to operate between their counties and any other destination.

**Background:** Over the last 15 years there has been general interest in creating a ferry service in the Chesapeake Bay between locations in Southern Maryland and the Eastern Shore. One individual who operates a successful ferry service in Mobile Bay in Alabama has expressed an interest in operating a ferry service in the Chesapeake Bay. The level of ferry services to be provided between St. Mary's and Somerset counties is not known. Ferry transit services could provide accommodations for passengers only, cars and trucks only, or both.

The General Assembly of Virginia passed Senate Bill 300 during its 2002 session, which grants authority to Northumberland County to grant an exclusive franchise for the operation of a vehicular ferry transportation system. Reedville, VA is in Northumberland County.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Somerset County, St. Mary's County, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 14, 2002  
ncs/hlb Revised - House Third Reader - March 27, 2002

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