

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2004 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 1167
Ways and Means

(Delegate Hixson, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Higher Education - Maryland Digital Library - Established

This bill establishes a Maryland Digital Library (MDL) within the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), as well as an MDL Advisory Council. MDL consists of the academic libraries in public and private nonprofit institutions of postsecondary education. After receiving recommendations from the MDL Advisory Council, MHEC may encourage each academic library to: (1) increase shared access to critical information in Internet-accessible form; (2) optimize funding; (3) digitize unique collections; (4) train librarians and staff to improve services in the information technology environment; and (5) develop training programs for library users. MDL is also authorized to develop programs to support Maryland residents in collaboration with county libraries, the Enoch Pratt Free Library, the Maryland State Archives, and elementary and secondary school libraries. The MDL Advisory Council must submit an annual report regarding the financial status and operations of MDL.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: MDL already exists and is funded with payments from participating institutions. MDL could continue to operate under its existing funding structure.

Local Effect: County libraries and public school libraries that collaborate with MDL could do so with existing resources.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: MDL presently exists, although it is not specifically established in State law.

Background: The Secretary of Higher Education established a Maryland Digital Library Task Force in 1998, and the task force presented its MDL concept to MHEC in 1999. In July 2000, initial funding from the Maryland Information Technology Board allowed MDL to begin operating. According to the MDL web site (www.md-diglib.org), students have conducted over 5.3 million searches and retrieved over 4.8 million articles through the initiative. Four-year institutions of higher education, higher education research centers, community colleges, and independent colleges and universities participate in MDL.

State funding for MDL, which consists of special funds collected from participating private institutions and reimbursable funds collected from participating public institutions, originally passed through MHEC's budget. During fiscal 2003 it was decided that participating institutions would pay fees directly to MDL, which is operated out of McKeldin Library on the University of Maryland, College Park campus. The special and reimbursable funds, therefore, are not included in the proposed fiscal 2005 budget for MHEC.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 615 (Senator Hollinger, *et al.*) – Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

Information Source(s): Maryland Higher Education Commission, Department of Legislative Services

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Analysis by: Mark W. Collins

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510

