

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2006 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 513
Finance

(Senator Pipkin)

**Queen Anne's County - Maryland Transportation Authority - Transportation
Facilities Projects**

This bill prohibits the Maryland Transportation Authority (MdTA) from entering into a contract or agreement to acquire or construct a transportation facilities project in Queen Anne's County unless the project has been approved by the county's Department of Planning and Zoning.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Nonbudgeted expenditures could potentially increase due to construction delays, plan revisions, and timing changes; however, the exact magnitude of any such change cannot be reliably estimated at this time.

Local Effect: Queen Anne's County expenditures would increase to review all MdTA plans for projects in the county. Depending on the number of projects, this increase in workload could require the county to hire additional personnel. **This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.**

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: MdTA has general supervision over all transportation facilities projects, including finance, construction, operation, repair, and maintenance. MdTA, its activities, and projects are exempt from taxation. MdTA has specified powers to carry out its mandate, including, but not limited to:

- acquisition and sale of land;
- establishment and operation of a police force;
- the ability to borrow money and issue revenue bonds;
- the power to fix, revise, charge, and collect rentals, rates, fees, tolls, and other charges and revenues on MdTA projects; and
- the ability to enter into contracts.

Background: Established in 1971 as an independent, nonbudgeted State agency, MdTA is responsible for the operation of the State's seven existing toll facilities. MdTA has assumed an expanded role in financing nontolled transportation facilities since the 1980s. MdTA has provided fund transfers and loans to the Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) and has assumed responsibility for building nontolled facilities that could not be financed through the TTF. MdTA has also served as the conduit through which debt backed by a number of revenue sources has been issued by several Maryland Department of Transportation modal administrations.

State Fiscal Effect: The *FY 2006-2011 Maryland Consolidated Transportation Plan* contains \$57.4 million in improvements to the William Preston Lane Memorial Bridge (Chesapeake Bay Bridge) that are specifically located in Queen Anne's County. Several additional studies, including the Bay Crossing Study assessing the need for additional traffic capacity across the Chesapeake Bay, and the Bay Bridge US 50/301 – Westbound Commercial Vehicle Security Staging Area Study, could result in more projects impacting Queen Anne's County.

As the bill requires the approval of the Queen Anne's Department of Planning and Zoning before proceeding, that department could require changes prior to granting approval. In addition to the cost associated with any such changes, the need for approval could cause delays to projects, thereby increasing construction costs; however, the exact magnitude of these costs, or whether they would be significant, cannot be reliably estimated at this time.

Local Fiscal Effect: Queen Anne's County Department of Planning and Zoning would have to review and approve all MdTA projects in Queen Anne's County before any such project could proceed. Planning approval entails a detailed review of the project and its effects. The Queen Anne's Department of Planning and Zoning has no process for approving land purchases or purchases of existing facilities.

Depending on the number of projects that MdTA undertakes in Queen Anne's County, this could result in a significant increase in the Department of Planning and Zoning's

workload; alternatively, it could result in no increase. If the number of projects is large, the department could have to hire additional personnel or contract with outside consultants with the specified knowledge to review transportation projects. Queen Anne's County advises that salaries for development review staff range from \$30,000 to \$60,000, plus benefits.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Queen Anne's County, Maryland Transportation Authority, Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

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mam/ljm

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