

Department of Legislative Services  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2006 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
 Revised

House Bill 756

(Delegate Cryor, *et al.*)

Environmental Matters

Finance

Transportation - Passenger Railroad Service Lines - Closure of MARC Train Stations

This emergency bill requires that the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) continue to operate three stations (the St. Denis, Dickerson, and Boyds Stations) on the CSX-operated Brunswick and Camden lines until March 6, 2007. It also requires that MTA perform several specific studies and report on its findings before closing any stations on these lines. The studies must include, but are not limited to: possible traffic congestion due to station closures, the impact of population growth in specified areas on ridership at the station, the methodology used to compute daily ridership, projected ridership under specified conditions, options to increase ridership at stations with low ridership, information on the schedule for installing ticket vending machines at the stations, and potential alternatives to closing stations.

Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** Transportation Trust Fund expenditures could increase by \$239,000 in FY 2007 for the required studies and for operating expenses associated with maintaining the three stations. Revenues would not be affected.

| (in dollars)   | FY 2007     | FY 2008 | FY 2009 | FY 2010 | FY 2011 |
|----------------|-------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Revenues       | \$0         | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     |
| SF Expenditure | 239,000     | 0       | 0       | 0       | 0       |
| Net Effect     | (\$239,000) | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     |

*Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate effect*

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## **Analysis**

**Current Law:** MTA must continue to operate the Brunswick and Camden lines at levels equivalent to the level of service as of July 1, 1981. MTA must also recover 50% of total operating costs for passenger railroad services from fares and operating revenues.

**Background:** MTA recently attempted to close four stations as of March 6, 2006 – the St. Denis, Dickerson, Jessup, and Boyds stations. The average daily ridership at these stations is approximately 36 to 46 people. In contrast, the average daily ridership at other MARC stations is approximately 671. The Montgomery County Council opposed the closing, and argued for increased advertising and trains placed on the routes in order to attract more riders. MTA reversed its decision and announced that it would not close the stations on February 10, 2006.

**State Revenues:** None. It is assumed that if the stations did not remain open, the passengers would travel to other MARC stations instead.

**State Expenditures:** MTA advises that it would incur operating budget expenditures of \$20,500 between March 7, 2006, and March 6, 2007, including utilities, maintenance, and snow removal. The fiscal effect for fiscal 2007 would be \$14,041. In addition, MTA advises that expenditures for consultants to conduct the mandated studies would increase by \$225,000 in fiscal 2007 if MTA were to close the stations as of March 7, 2007.

The Maryland Transportation Authority advises that it would incur capital costs of \$508,000 in fiscal 2007 due to the following expenses: six vending machines for tickets at the three stations (\$348,000), and \$160,000 for MTA's share of relocating the platform due to a CSX project at Halethorpe station involving adding additional track to improve efficiency. Legislative Services advises that MTA could avoid the capital costs of the vending machines by maintaining current practices.

In addition, the platform would have to be relocated anyway, as after the Halethorpe project is completed, trains will no longer be able to negotiate the station. The \$160,000 has already been included in the *FY 2006-2011 Consolidated Transportation Plan*; as such, it is not an additional expense.

MTA advises that there are several other capital expenditures associated with the stations, including passenger warning systems that, while not necessarily required in the next year, will be required if the stations stay open longer than that.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** SB 366 (Senator Garagiola, *et al.*) – Finance.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 7, 2006  
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