

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2007 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 967

(Delegate O'Donnell)

Environmental Matters

Budget and Taxation

Program Open Space - Capital Improvements - Maryland Historical Trust and
Historic St. Mary's City Commission

This bill expands the allowable use of the portion of the State's share of Program Open Space (POS) funds that may be used for capital improvements to include land owned by the State for the use of the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) for museums operated by the trust or the Historic St. Mary's City Commission (HSMCC).

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: State revenues and expenditures would not be affected. The bill merely authorizes the distribution of special funds for capital improvements to two additional State agencies.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: Up to 25% of the State's share of funds under POS may be used for capital improvements on land owned by the State for the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) use if the improvements are approved in the State budget and compatible with any master plan developed for the land and the natural features of the land.

Background: POS, established in 1969 and administered by DNR, provides funds for State and local acquisition and development of public outdoor recreational sites, facilities, and open space. Generally, funding for POS is equally divided between the State and local governments. The State share focuses on the acquisition of land for natural resource conservation with the inclusion of low-impact recreational activities where appropriate. The local share is used primarily for the acquisition and development of high-impact recreational sites and facilities.

MHT was formed in 1961 to assist the people of Maryland in identifying, studying, evaluating, preserving, protecting, and interpreting the State's significant prehistoric and historic districts, sites, structures, cultural landscapes, heritage areas, cultural objects, and artifacts, as well as less tangible human and community traditions. MHT is the principal operating unit within the Division of Historical and Cultural Programs, which is an agency of the Maryland Department of Planning.

HSMCC preserves, develops, and maintains Historic St. Mary's City, an outdoor museum and archeological park on the site of Maryland's original settlement. The commission originated in 1965 and is now an independent agency within the Office of the Governor.

State Fiscal Effect: This bill affects the distribution of the State share of POS funding, and thus would not impact overall State expenditures. To the extent POS capital funds are directed to MHT and HSMCC, less funding would be made available for DNR to complete capital improvements on State park lands.

Since 1983, the State capital budget has been the primary source of funds for capital development projects at the MHT-administered Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum (JPPM) and Banneker-Douglass Museum. The Banneker-Douglass Museum recently completed a major building renovation. However, JPPM has not received State capital funds since fiscal 2003 and is not scheduled to receive additional capital funds from this source until fiscal 2012. Currently, JPPM requires \$3.8 million to make significant improvements to the Patterson Center, a complex of six buildings donated to JPPM, so it can operate as a museum facility. Therefore, this bill could result in additional capital funding for the Patterson Center or other JPPM projects prior to fiscal 2012.

The State capital budget has also been the primary source of funds for capital development projects at the Historic St. Mary's City museum and archeological park. In fiscal 2003 through 2007, \$10.2 million in State capital funding has been appropriated to HSMCC for the St. John's Site Museum, Maryland Dove Pathway, and Nuthead Print House projects. The fiscal 2008 allowance includes \$1.5 million for the St. John's Site Museum and Maryland Interpretative Center. The 2007 Capital Improvement Program

anticipates \$9.8 million for HSMCC projects in fiscal 2009-2012. This bill could result in additional capital funds for HSMCC projects.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Planning, Department of Natural Resources, Historic St. Mary's City Commission, Department of Budget and Management, Department of Legislative Services

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ncs/ljm

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