

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2008 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 644

(Senator Pugh, *et al.*)

Finance

Baltimore Regional Transportation Authority Study Task Force

This bill establishes a Baltimore Regional Transportation Authority Study Task Force, staffed by the Maryland Department of Transportation and the Baltimore Metropolitan Council. The task force must study and make recommendations regarding the creation of an independent authority to develop, finance, and operate transportation service within the Baltimore region, either in lieu of or in addition to any services provided under the authority of the Maryland Department of Transportation. The bill also provides for other duties of the task force. A report with findings and recommendations is due by October 1, 2009.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2008 and terminates December 31, 2009.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Staffing for the task force and expense reimbursement could be handled with existing resources.

Local Effect: It is assumed that local agencies could comply with requests for information with existing resources.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) has jurisdiction over planning, developing, acquiring, financing, and operating certain transit facilities,

including the Baltimore mass transit system. MTA may not establish or abandon any route without a public hearing. In addition, MTA must prepare plans to meet the transit needs of the Metropolitan Transit District, which must include the transit facilities to be established, the areas to be served, and the type of equipment to be used. MTA must maintain a copy of the proposed plan for public viewing and hold one public hearing. MTA must consider evidence and commentary presented at the hearing.

The Baltimore Metropolitan Council promotes cooperation among local governments in the Baltimore metropolitan area to share information, collect data, and solve common problems. It also anticipates future needs in infrastructure, the environment, and economic development. Under formal agreements among its members, the council provides regional planning for solid waste management and transportation. The council is composed of the Mayor of Baltimore; the county executives of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Harford, and Howard counties, Maryland; and a Carroll County commissioner.

State Expenditures: Legislative Services advises that staffing the task force could be handled with existing resources. Any minimal expenses for travel and meal reimbursement could be handled with existing resources. It is assumed that the task force would use existing MTA resources and studies to study, investigate, monitor, and make recommendations on Baltimore Transit. Staffing, resources, and consulting fees would be primarily borne by MTA given the Baltimore Metropolitan Council's limited staffing.

Local Expenditures: None. MDOT advises MTA would provide staff and resources to the task force, given the Baltimore Metropolitan Council's limited staffing.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: Similar bills were introduced in the 2007 and 2006 sessions as SB 439 and SB827; respectively, and would have created a Baltimore Metropolitan Transit District Advisory Council. The council would make recommendations to MTA regarding bus and rail transit. Both bills received hearing in the Senate Finance Committee.

Cross File: None identified although HB 793 (Delegate Haynes, *et al.*) – Environmental Matters is identical.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Transportation, Maryland Manual On-Line, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 18, 2008
ncs/lgc

Analysis by: Michael P. Lee

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