

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2008 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 888 (Delegate McDonough, *et al.*)
Environmental Matters

Task Force to Study Recreational Boating in Baltimore County

This bill establishes a Task Force to Study Recreational Boating in Baltimore County to evaluate and make recommendations on Baltimore County regulations to assist the boating industry with economic development. A final report of its findings and recommendations are due to the Governor and the General Assembly by June 1, 2009. The Department of Business and Economic Development must provide staff for the task force.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2008 and terminates June 30, 2009.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for DBED are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: Baltimore County representatives appointed to the task force could participate without impacting local expenditures.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Background: According to a 2000 survey by the University of Maryland, Maryland Sea Grant Extension Program, recreational boaters spent approximately \$226 million that directly impacted recreational boating and related businesses in Baltimore County.

Chapter 523 of 2007 established the Task Force to Study the Boating Industry in Maryland. The task force is charged with:

- evaluating incentives to encourage large boats and yachts to use marinas and boatyards for recreation, repair, and outfitting within the State;
- determining ways to encourage and promote tourism throughout State waters;
- researching the economic impact that marine industries and recreational boaters contribute to the State's economy; and
- identifying barriers that limit the State's competitiveness with other states regarding the boating industry and developing methods to overcome those barriers.

Chapter 523 required the task force to submit a preliminary report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and specified committees of the General Assembly by November 30, 2007. A final report is due by June 30, 2008. DBED and DNR are required to provide staff for the task force.

In a November 5, 2007 letter to the Governor and the Presiding Officers, the task force chairman noted that the task force held its first meeting in October. The letter, which is also the preliminary report required by Chapter 523, indicated that due to the late appointment of the task force members, the time commitments associated with the 2007 special session, and the expansive charge of the task force, additional time was needed to complete its work. The letter noted that legislation would be introduced to extend the final reporting deadline (SB 7/HB 17 of 2008).

At a January 4, 2008 meeting, the task force identified three goals: (1) identify a marketing agenda directed at out-of-state boaters; (2) provide the best environment for growth and expansion of the marine industry; and (3) identify factors that promote and maintain water access for boaters and the boating industry. Three subcommittees were established and tasks were identified for each. The subcommittees plan to meet during the 2008 session, and the task force plans to reconvene at the end of April.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Business and Economic Development,
Baltimore County, Department of Legislative Services

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mcp/hlb

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