

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2009 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 116

(The President)(By Request - Department of Legislative Services)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Environmental Matters

State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners - Sunset Extension and Program Evaluation

This bill extends the termination date for the State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (SBVME) by 10 years to July 1, 2021, and requires an evaluation of the board by July 1, 2020. The bill includes a related reporting requirement.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2009.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Special fund revenues and expenditures for the board are maintained beyond FY 2011. The Governor's proposed FY 2010 budget includes \$515,200 for board operations. The bill's reporting requirement can be handled with existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: The Maryland General Assembly created SBVME in 1894. SBVME's stated mission is to protect the public and animal health and welfare through:

- (1) effective licensure of veterinarians, veterinary technicians, and veterinary hospitals under its jurisdiction;

- (2) effective discipline of veterinarians, veterinary technicians, and operators of veterinary hospitals under its jurisdiction, when warranted; and
- (3) adoption of reasonable standards for the practice of veterinary medicine in the State of Maryland.

SBVME consists of seven members appointed by the Governor; five of whom are licensed and registered veterinarians. The board regulates just over 2,400 veterinarians, just over 500 veterinary hospitals, and approximately 315 registered veterinary technicians. Veterinarians and veterinary hospitals must be licensed by the board. Veterinarians must also register annually with the board. A person *may* register with the board as a veterinary technician.

SBVME became a special-funded entity in fiscal 2005, pursuant to Chapter 245 of 2004, and has a fiscal 2009 appropriation of \$487,241. The board's staff consists of an executive director, an administrative specialist, an office secretary, two agricultural inspectors who split their time between the Maryland Horse Industry Board and SBVME, an investigator, and a part-time assistant Attorney General. SBVME is housed within the Maryland Department of Agriculture's Marketing, Animal Industries, and Consumer Services Office.

SBVME is one of approximately 70 entities currently subject to periodic evaluation under the Maryland Program Evaluation Act. The Act establishes a process better known as "sunset review" as most agencies evaluated are also subject to termination, including SBVME which is scheduled to terminate July 1, 2011. The sunset review process begins with a preliminary evaluation conducted by the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) on behalf of the Legislative Policy Committee (LPC). LPC decides whether to waive an agency from further (or full) evaluation. If waived, legislation to reauthorize the agency typically is enacted. Otherwise, a full evaluation usually is undertaken the following year.

A preliminary sunset evaluation of SBVME conducted by DLS during the 2008 interim found that the board plays an important role in regulating veterinary medical professionals and facilities and its existence is necessary for the public interest. The evaluation recommended that the board be waived from full evaluation and legislation be enacted to extend the board's termination date by 10 years to July 1, 2021. It was also recommended that the board submit a follow-up report by October 1, 2009, regarding specified issues relating to registered veterinary technicians and the board's penalty authority, public outreach, and disciplinary caseload. This bill implements those recommendations, as adopted by LPC at its December 16, 2008 meeting.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File:HB 62 (The Speaker)(By Request - Department of Legislative Services) - Environmental Matters.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Agriculture (State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners), Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 30, 2009
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