

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2009 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

House Bill 1537 (Delegate Walkup, *et al.*)  
Environmental Matters

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**Task Force to Study the Feasibility of Establishing Teleworking Centers on the Eastern Shore for Chesapeake Bay Bridge Commuters**

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This bill establishes a Task Force to Study the Feasibility of Establishing Teleworking Centers on the Eastern Shore for Chesapeake Bay Bridge Commuters. The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) must provide staff support for the task force. The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 31, 2009.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2009, and terminates June 30, 2010.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Given the State's fiscal difficulties, agency budgets have been constrained. Thus, the requirement to staff the task force is not absorbable within the existing budgeted resources of MDOT. Instead, Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) expenditures increase in FY 2010, primarily for contractual staff to support the task force. Revenues are not affected.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The task force is required to:

- examine existing teleworking centers located along the Eastern Shore's northern Route 50/301 corridor in general, and specifically in Queen Anne's, Kent, and Talbot counties, and identify other possible teleworking center sites in that corridor;
- evaluate the feasibility of establishing a State-assisted pilot teleworking center for Bay Bridge commuters at Chesapeake College in Wye Mills, Maryland; and
- identify other possible teleworking centers, formulate projected operating costs and commuter participation, and suggest promotional outreach measures for up to 10 teleworking centers on the Eastern Shore that would offer the greatest potential to (1) reduce Friday commuter traffic between Memorial Day and Labor Day; (2) reduce daily traffic congestion during commuting hours on the Bay Bridge year round; and (3) provide temporary alternative work sites for commuters during emergency closures of the Bay Bridge lanes for maintenance or other causes.

The task force must hold its meetings at Chesapeake College.

Members of the task force may not receive compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations.

**Background:** Teleworking is benefiting companies throughout the country by allowing employees to work outside the traditional company environment. Teleworkers may work at home or in a satellite office using a computer and a telephone.

The State's telework policy encourages agencies to meet a goal of 10% of eligible employees teleworking at least four days per month. In its 2004 *Report on Teleworking*, the most recent study available, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) reported that 16 State agencies had either met or exceeded the 10% goal and approximately 493 employees teleworked on an occasional basis. DBM advises that, while some State agencies may provide telecommunications equipment and services for teleworkers, generally teleworkers provide their own equipment and Internet service.

The State helps to operate several federally funded telework centers located in National Guard armories. Each center has computer work stations, office equipment, and phone lines. Use of National Guard telework centers is free to State employees. The U.S. General Services Administration manages telework centers in Bowie, Frederick, Hagerstown, Laurel, Prince Frederick, and Waldorf. The monthly fee for use of these

facilities is approximately \$100 per weekday worked, with a maximum monthly fee of approximately \$500.

MDOT currently operates the Telework Partnership with Employers program, which provides professional telework consulting services and information to Maryland employers to help them initiate or expand telework programs. The program is operated in conjunction with the Baltimore Metropolitan Council and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 19, 2009  
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