

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2010 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 1045 (Delegate Carter, *et al.*)
Health and Government Operations

State Government - Commemorative Days - Earth Hour

This emergency bill requires the Governor to annually issue an order, in observance of Earth Hour, which requires the lights of the Government House and the State House to be turned off on the last Saturday in March at 8:30 p.m. and to remain off for one hour.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Commemorating Earth Hour does not affect State finances. Any decrease in expenditures from shutting the lights down in the Government House and the State House would be negligible.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Seven official commemorative days and two months are recognized in State law as shown in **Exhibit 1**. The Governor also must issue a proclamation each year encouraging citizens and other individuals to observe a moment of silence at 3 p.m. on Memorial Day to unite in remembrance and commemorate the heroic acts and efforts of Marylanders who have served and died in the U.S. armed forces.

Background: Earth Hour is the World Wildlife Fund's global initiative where individuals, schools, organizations, businesses, and governments turn off their lights for one hour to cast a vote in favor of action on climate change. By voting with their light

switches, Earth Hour participants send a visual message demanding action be taken to combat climate change.

In 2009, more than 4,000 cities in 87 countries participated in Earth Hour. In the United States, an estimated 80 million Americans participated, along with eight states, and 318 cities. Iconic landmarks around the world participated in Earth Hour including the Las Vegas Strip, New York City's Brooklyn Bridge, United Nations headquarters, and Big Ben and the House of Parliament in London, England. The next Earth Hour is scheduled for March 27, 2010.

Additional Comments: The last Saturday in March is “crossover weekend,” the weekend before the crossover deadline by which each chamber must send to the opposite chamber bills it wishes to pass. It is likely both chambers will be in session crossover weekend. Whether they meet into the evening is unknown.

Exhibit 1 **Official Commemorative Days and Months in Maryland**

Asian Lunar New Year Day ¹	January/February
Black History Month	February
Women's History Month	March
John Hanson's Birthday ²	April 13
Law Day	May 1
Negro Baseball League Day ³	May
Maryland Charter Day	June 20
Poetry Day	October 15
Annapolis Charter Day	December 17

¹Day designated as new year on the Asian lunar calendar.

²John Hanson served as the first president of the Continental Congress under the Articles of Confederation from 1781 to 1782.

³Negro Baseball League Day is held the second Saturday of May.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): World Wildlife Fund, Governor's Office, Department of Budget and Management, Department of Legislative Services

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ncs/hlb

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