

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2010 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

House Bill 1398 (Delegate Haynes, *et al.*)  
Health and Government Operations

**Study on Number and Placement of Fire Stations in Baltimore City**

This emergency bill requires the State Fire Marshal, in consultation with the Mayor of Baltimore City and the Chief of the Baltimore City Fire Department, to study and make findings and recommendations on the appropriate number and placement of fire stations in Baltimore City. The bill requires the study to begin within 30 days of enactment and requires the findings and recommendations to be made within 60 days of enactment to the Governor, the mayor and city council, the city fire chief, and the General Assembly. The bill specifies the factors and issues that must be considered by the State Fire Marshal.

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures increase by \$250,000 in FY 2011. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	250,000	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$250,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

*Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate effect*

**Local Effect:** None. Baltimore City is not required to implement any potential study recommendations. Any costs associated with possible findings or recommendations are not a direct result of the bill.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

## Analysis

**Current Law:** Baltimore City has 40 neighborhood fire stations located throughout the city, as shown in **Exhibit 1**. The Baltimore City fire department's budget for fiscal 2010 totals \$153.6 million, of which \$139.1 million comes from city funds, with the remainder coming from federal and State funds and revenue generated from emergency transport fees. There are 1,790 employees in the department, including about 1,300 firefighters and 200 paramedics. About 90 departmental vacancies currently exist. The department currently operates with four companies being closed per day and night on a rotating basis as a cost-savings measure.

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**Exhibit 1**



Note: Individual numbers represent fire stations and stars represent police stations in Baltimore City.

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**Background:** In December 2009, three city fire companies were slated to be permanently closed at the beginning of 2010 and firefighters at those stations reassigned to other stations. According to *The Baltimore Sun*, the city fire chief announced that closing the three companies, located in the central part of the city and near to other units, would allow the city to reduce the frequency that remote fire stations are closed as part of a daily rotation to reduce overtime. The plan was considered a cost-savings measure and endorsed by the mayor. However, opposition to the closings quickly emerged from city council members and union officials who said that response times would grow and put both firefighters and residents in danger. The companies scheduled for closing were

(1) Engine 14, 1908 Hollins St. in Carrollton Ridge; (2) Truck 15, 1223 N. Montford Ave. in Broadway East; and (3) Truck 16, 405 McMechen St. in Upton. After much discussion, the closure decision was rescinded, though recent newspaper accounts have said that as many as 125 firefighters and a dozen additional companies could be scheduled for closure in fiscal 2011.

**State Fiscal Effect:** The State Fire Marshal intends to hire a consultant to perform the required study, since the office currently does not have the resources or expertise to complete an appropriate study. Due to State procurement requirements, it will take approximately three to six months to post a request for proposal (RFP) and award a contract. The study would require 10 weeks to complete at a cost of \$250,000. This estimate is based on a four-person team comprised of a program manager, business analyst, fire/EMS subject matter expert, and a senior consultant. Cost estimates are based on similar type projects in other jurisdictions. The study must consider the following issues:

- population demographics within Baltimore City;
- average response times for fire and emergency services personnel; and
- increased needs for fire and emergency services due to the location of hospitals, senior high-rise residences, and vacant or abandoned buildings.

Due to the projected procurement and study schedule, the State Fire Marshall will not be able to comply with the reporting requirement deadlines as established in the bill.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Baltimore City, Department of State Police, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 16, 2010  
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