

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2011 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Joint Resolution 5 (Delegate Carter, *et al.*)
Rules and Executive Nominations

Resolution on Earth Hour

This joint resolution expresses the General Assembly's recognition of Earth Hour as 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on March 26, 2011; urges all Marylanders to observe Earth Hour; and urges the Governor to order that the lights in the Government House and State Capitol complex be turned off during Earth Hour.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Compliance with this joint resolution will not materially affect State finances. Assuming the Governor orders that the lights in the Government House and State Capitol complex be turned off during Earth Hour, any decrease in energy expenditures will be negligible.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Eight official commemorative days and three 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 to encourage individuals, schools, organizations, businesses, and governments to turn off their lights

for one hour to show support for actions to address climate change. In 2010, more than 4,500 cities in 128 countries participated in Earth Hour. In the United States, an estimated 90 million Americans participated. Iconic landmarks around the world also participated in Earth Hour including the Las Vegas Strip, Mount Rushmore, and the Empire State Building. In 2011, Earth Hour will be held on March 26 from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Additional Comments: March 26, 2011, falls on “crossover weekend,” when the General Assembly chambers are traditionally in session to meet the crossover deadline. Turning off the lights in the State Capitol complex to recognize Earth Hour could disrupt the General Assembly’s work to the extent either chamber would otherwise be in session or staff work would otherwise be conducted during the affected hour.

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
Negro Baseball League Day ³	May
Law Day	May 1
Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Services Workers Day ⁴	June
Maryland Charter Day	June 20
Hispanic Heritage Month ⁵	September/October
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.

³Commemorated on the second Saturday in May.

⁴Commemorated on the first Sunday in June.

⁵Commemorated from September 15 to October 15.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HJ 9 of 2010 received an unfavorable report from the House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee. Its cross file, SJ 6, passed the Senate but received an unfavorable report from the House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): World Wildlife Fund, Department of Legislative Services

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mlm/hlb

Analysis by: Jennifer A. Ellick

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510