

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

Senate Joint Resolution 1 (Chair, Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
Committee)(By Request - Departmental - Planning)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Rules and Executive Nominations

Patuxent River Watershed - Amendment of Patuxent River Policy Plan

This departmental joint resolution approves the 2015 Patuxent River Policy Plan update as an amendment to the Patuxent River Policy Plan, effective immediately.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The joint resolution does not directly affect State finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) has determined that this bill has minimal or no impact on small business (attached). The Department of Legislative Services concurs with this assessment.

Analysis

Current Law: The Patuxent River Policy Plan is used as a policy guide by local jurisdictions and units of State government in carrying out their action and regulatory programs in the Patuxent River Watershed. A process for amendment of the plan is established in statute. MDP has primary responsibility for preparing proposed amendments, in consultation with local jurisdictions and appropriate units of State government. The Patuxent River Commission (made up of 34 members appointed by the Governor and representing various jurisdictions, organizations/agencies, and interests) distributes and solicits input on the proposed amendment, reviews and comments on it, and works with MDP in making any modifications. The proposed amendment is then presented to the governing bodies of the local jurisdictions represented on the commission, for their

approval, by resolution. If six of the eight local jurisdictions represented on the commission approve the proposed amendment, it is then presented to the General Assembly to approve by joint resolution.

Background: The Patuxent River Commission adopted the 2015 Patuxent River Policy Plan Update in May 2014, after outreach to governing bodies of local jurisdictions and the public. The governing bodies of all eight local jurisdictions represented on the commission have since approved the plan update.

The first Patuxent River Policy Plan was approved in 1984. The 2015 plan update is intended to (1) build on the goals and recommendations of the 1984 plan; (2) support the programmatic guidelines of a plan update done in 1997; and (3) provide a more strategic and policy-oriented document that reflects the changes that have taken place in the last 18 years. The plan update indicates that while the plan, since 1984, has called for a more regulatory approach to address declining water quality of the river, with water quality now being addressed under the federally mandated Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load and watershed implementation plans, this plan update shifts the plan away from a regulatory framework. It focuses instead on guiding local jurisdictions and the State in “preserving and restoring the river, raising awareness of the river through advocacy, and creating excitement about the multiple opportunities for interaction with the river.”

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Planning, Maryland Department of the Environment, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 14, 2016
md/lgc

Analysis by: Scott D. Kennedy

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

ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC IMPACT ON SMALL BUSINESSES

TITLE OF BILL: Patuxent River Watershed – Amendment of Patuxent River Policy Plan

BILL NUMBER: SJ 1

PREPARED BY:

PART A. ECONOMIC IMPACT RATING

This agency estimates that the proposed bill:

WILL HAVE MINIMAL OR NO ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND SMALL BUSINESS

OR

WILL HAVE MEANINGFUL ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND SMALL BUSINESSES

PART B. ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

No anticipated negative impact on small businesses; the Plan does not impose any requirements on small businesses. The Plan promotes strategies that could help small businesses that use the Patuxent River for fishing and recreation.