

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 937

(Delegate Glenn, *et al.*)

Economic Matters

Public Service Commission - Commissioners - Selection and Term

This bill requires that one commissioner of the Public Service Commission (PSC) be appointed by the President of the Senate and one commissioner be appointed by the Speaker of the House, rather than all five commissioners being appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. The remaining three commissioners are appointed in the same manner as under current law. The first appointment by the President occurs in mid-2018, and the first appointment by the Speaker occurs in mid-2019.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2016.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill does not materially affect State finances or operations.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: All five PSC commissioners are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. Appointments are for five years and expire on a staggered basis. PSC must be broadly representative of the geographic and demographic diversity of the State and the public and composed of individuals with diverse training and experience. Each commissioner must devote full time to the duties of office. The Governor may remove a commissioner for incompetence or misconduct.

Utility Commissioner Selection in Other States

The manner in which utility commissioners are selected varies by state. The majority of commissioners are appointed by the governor of the state and, usually, confirmed by the legislature. In some states, commissioners are elected by popular vote. In Connecticut, each presiding officer appoints two members to the Connecticut Siting Council (one each for energy/telecommunications and hazardous waste), while the remaining members are appointed by the governor and state agencies. The South Carolina and Virginia legislatures elect commissioners.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Public Service Commission, Connecticut Siting Council, Department of Legislative Services

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