A BILL ENTITLED

AN ACT concerning

Natural Resources Police Force – Hiring and Promotion Plan – Requirement

FOR the purpose of requiring the Department of Natural Resources, in consultation with the Natural Resources Police Force, to develop, implement, and adhere to a hiring and promotion plan to transition the composition of the Natural Resources Police Force to reflect the demographics of the State; prohibiting the Department from initiating or continuing any promotion process for the Natural Resources Police Force before the plan is published; requiring the Secretary of Natural Resources to direct the Comptroller to withhold a certain amount of funding from the Department if the Department fails to meet certain requirements; and generally relating to a hiring and promotion plan for the Natural Resources Police Force.

BY adding to

Article – Natural Resources
Section 1–203.1
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2018 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Natural Resources

1–203.1.

(A) IT IS THE INTENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY THAT, ON OR BEFORE SEPTEMBER 30, 2027, THE COMPOSITION OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES POLICE FORCE REFLECT THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE STATE TO THE EXTENT PRACTICABLE.
(B) (1) The Department, in consultation with the Natural Resources Police Force, shall develop, implement, and adhere to a hiring and promotion plan to achieve the goal established under subsection (A) of this section.

(2) In developing and implementing the hiring and promotion plan under paragraph (1) of this subsection, the Department shall:

   (I) Establish a goal that on or before October 1, 2024, the Natural Resources Police Force achieve an improvement of at least 20% each year in representative composition compared to 2021 State demographics; and

   (II) Establish a goal that the Natural Resources Police Force be representative of State demographics for the immediately preceding calendar year.

(C) (1) (I) Beginning June 1, 2023, and each year thereafter, the Superintendent of the Natural Resources Police Force, the Director of the Department’s Human Resources Services, and the Director of the Department’s Office of Fair Practices shall meet on or around June 1 to discuss the progress of the hiring and promotion plan implemented under subsection (B) of this section.

   (II) The Department shall request that the Officers of the Natural Resources Police Force Black Officers Association attend the meetings required under subparagraph (i) of this paragraph.

(2) (I) On or before October 1, 2023, the Department shall:

   1. Complete and publish the hiring and promotion plan required under subsection (B) of this section; and

   2. Provide the plan to the Natural Resources Police Force Black Officers Association and, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee and the House Environment and Transportation Committee.

   (II) On or before December 1, 2023, and each December 1 for the next 4 years, the Department shall report to the Senate
§ 2–1257 of the State Government Article, on the status of implementing the hiring and promotion plan established under subsection (b) of this section.

(III) The Department may not initiate or continue any promotion process for the Natural Resources Police Force before the publication of the hiring and promotion plan under subparagraph (i) of this paragraph.

(iv) The Secretary shall direct the Comptroller to withhold $500,000 from the Department if the Department fails to meet the publication and reporting requirements established under this paragraph.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2022.