

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2022 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

Senate Bill 1003 (Senator Eckardt)  
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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**Legal Advertisement or Legal Notice – Publication in Newspaper or Newspaper  
in General Circulation – Online Newspapers**

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This bill expands the definition of “newspaper” or “newspaper in general circulation,” as they generally apply to statutory or other requirements to publish a legal advertisement or legal notice, to include publications that are offered either in print format or through a dedicated website.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** The bill is not expected to materially affect State operations or finances. State agencies that publish legal notices may have increased options for publishing such notices under the bill.

**Local Effect:** The bill is not expected to materially affect local government operations or finances. Local governments may have increased options for publishing legal notices under the bill.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** Unless otherwise provided, words such as “newspaper” or “newspaper in general circulation” as they are used in the context of publishing a legal advertisement or legal notice mean a publication that:

- has at least four pages;

- habitually contains news items, reports of current events, editorial comments, advertising matter, and other miscellaneous information that is of public interest and is found generally in an ordinary newspaper;
- has been published and distributed, by sale, from an established place of business at least once a week for six months or more before publication of the advertisement or notice;
- has general circulation throughout the community where the publication is published; and
- qualifies for periodicals rates for mailing through the U.S. Postal Service.

In Prince George's County, "newspaper in general circulation" includes (1) a newspaper that is designated by the county council as a newspaper of record or (2) a newspaper that otherwise meets the above definition and is published by a small business as defined in the State Finance and Procurement Article.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** SB 305 of 2021 received a hearing in the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, but no further action was taken. Its cross file, HB 79, received a hearing in the House Health and Government Operations Committee, but no further action was taken.

**Designated Cross File:** HB 1475 (Dorchester County Delegation) - Rules and Executive Nominations.

**Information Source(s):** Caroline, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties; Department of Human Services; Department of Natural Resources; Maryland Department of the Environment; Department of General Services; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Register of Wills; Maryland Department of Transportation; Maryland State Treasurer's Office; Maryland Municipal League; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 21, 2022  
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