

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2023 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
 First Reader

House Bill 788
 Appropriations

(Delegate Rosenberg, *et al.*)

Commission to Advance and Strengthen Fire Fighting Within Maryland

This bill establishes the Commission to Advance and Strengthen Fire Fighting Within Maryland. The commission must study and make recommendations regarding (1) the effectiveness and viability of uniform incentives, offerings, or practices employed in other states to attract, support, and retain individuals in fire fighting roles; (2) the suitability of comparable or similar incentives, offerings, and practices as compared to the landscape of the State; and (3) any other global issues the commission may consider useful in enhancing and supporting career and volunteer fire fighting in the State. The Maryland Department of Labor (MDL) must provide staff for the commission. A commission member may not receive compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for expenses. By December 1, 2023, the commission must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2023, and terminates June 30, 2024.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$25,000 in FY 2024 only. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	25,000	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$25,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Note: () = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease

Local Effect: The bill does not materially affect local government operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Several State entities are involved in fire and rescue-related services:

- The Office of the State Fire Marshal within the Department of State Police is responsible for statewide fire, arson, and explosive investigations, enforcement of the State Fire Prevention Code, coordination of fire prevention efforts, and the collection of fire incident data.
- The Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute (MFRI) of the University of Maryland is responsible for providing classroom education and training for career and volunteer fire and rescue personnel. Among other things, MFRI cooperates with the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS) to train rescue personnel and emergency medical technicians.
- MIEMSS oversees and coordinates all components of the statewide Emergency Medical Services System.
- The Maryland Department of Emergency Management administers the Senator William H. Amoss Fire, Rescue, and Ambulance Fund, which provides grants to local jurisdictions for the purchase of fire and rescue equipment and building rehabilitation.

State Expenditures: General fund expenditures increase by \$25,041 in fiscal 2024 only, which accounts for a 30-day start-up delay from the bill’s June 1, 2023 effective date. MDL advises that it does not have staff available to support the work of the commission; thus, the agency has determined that one regular part-time position is needed to provide staff for the commission. However, the Department of Legislative Services advises that the added responsibilities incurred by this legislation are not permanent and, thus, may be performed by a contractual employee. Accordingly, this estimate reflects the cost of hiring one part-time contractual employee through December 31, 2023, to staff the commission and prepare the required report. It includes a salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

Contractual Position	0.5
Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$18,162
Operating Expenses	<u>6,879</u>
Total FY 2024 State Expenditures	\$25,041

This estimate does not include any health insurance costs that could be incurred for the specified contractual employee under the State’s implementation of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Any expense reimbursements for commission members are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: SB 414 (Senator Augustine, *et al.*) - Education, Energy, and the Environment.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Labor; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 15, 2023
js/lgc

Analysis by: Shirleen M. E. Pilgrim

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