

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 272

(Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee)(By
Request - Departmental - Planning)

Environment and Transportation

Education, Energy, and the Environment

Maryland Department of Planning – Modernization

This departmental bill makes various changes to State law relating to (1) election precinct boundary data; (2) county water supply, sewerage, and solid waste disposal plans; (3) population projections; (4) real property information; (5) obsolete reporting requirements; (6) capital facilities planning information and access; (7) authorized funding for regional planning projects; and (8) geographic classification standards.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill does not directly affect State finances.

Local Effect: The bill does not directly affect local government finances.

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 (DLS) concurs with this assessment. (The attached assessment does not reflect amendments to the bill.)

Analysis

Bill Summary/Current Law: The bill makes the following changes to State law:

- (1) *Precinct Boundary Data* – The bill requires the State Administrator of Elections to send information on new election precincts or changes to precinct boundaries to MDP upon receipt of the information from local boards of elections.

- (2) *County Water Supply, Sewerage, and Solid Waste Disposal Plans* – The bill modifies a requirement that the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) submit a county’s plan for water supply, sewerage, and solid waste disposal to MDP for advice, so that MDE is only required to submit the water supply and sewerage portion of the plan to MDP.
- (3) *Population Projections* – The bill modifies provisions governing MDP’s preparation of population projections for the State and local governments so that (1) MDP only must prepare projections for a municipality if the municipality requests it; (2) only State and county projections must include details of age, sex, and race; and (3) in preparing projections for the Washington metropolitan and Baltimore metropolitan areas, MDP may use population figures developed by the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, and the member jurisdictions of these councils. The bill also removes an authorization for MDP to use population figures developed by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) in preparing population projections for the Washington metropolitan area.
- (4) *Real Property Information* – The bill modifies provisions requiring MDP to be a repository and clearinghouse for information on real property available for public use, by (1) removing references to MDP being a “clearinghouse” and (2) establishing that MDP must only be a repository for information on State-owned (and not local government-owned or other public) property.
- (5) *Obsolete Reporting Requirements* – The bill removes a requirement that MDP’s annual report include a summary of the work of the State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Commission (which no longer exists) and removes a requirement that local jurisdictions report information to the commission on certain local construction projects.
- (6) *Capital Facilities Planning Information and Access* – The bill repeals provisions that require MDP to have access to capital facilities planning information possessed by any State government unit and to have specified access to any State-owned land to make examinations and surveys that relate to capital facilities planning.
- (7) *Authorized Funding for Regional Planning Projects* – The bill repeals provisions that authorize MDP to include funding of up to \$100,000 per year in the department’s budget for regional planning projects programmed by M-NCPPC for the following fiscal year.

- (8) *Geographic Classification Standards* – The bill repeals a requirement that MDP establish statewide classification standards for geographically referencing all basic planning information collected by any unit of State government.

Background: The bill’s changes have the following background (corresponding with the numbering and headings under Bill Summary/Current Law):

- (1) *Precinct Boundary Data* – MDP indicates that the bill’s requirement saves staff time currently required to collect information on new election precincts and changed precinct boundaries, from local boards of elections, in order to update precinct population counts and maps published by the department.
- (2) *County Water Supply, Sewerage, and Solid Waste Disposal Plans* – MDP indicates that solid waste disposal planning has relatively little impact on land use planning and involves logistics and engineering matters in which the department does not have expertise. MDE indicates that it receives comments from MDP on solid waste disposal plans only on occasion.
- (3) *Population Projections* – MDP indicates that (1) it does not currently prepare population projections for all municipalities and does not have the resources to do so and (2) the bill’s changes allow for it to provide consistent and accurate projections for counties and, upon request, for municipalities.
- (4) *Real Property Information* – MDP indicates that it does not currently maintain information on all real property available for public use and does not have the resources to do so.
- (5) *Obsolete Reporting Requirements* – In the 2001 sunset evaluation of the State Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Commission, DLS advised that the commission lacked a defined role and focus and that there was considerable overlap with other State entities such as MDP. Pursuant to the Maryland Program Evaluation Act, the commission’s authority terminated on July 1, 2003.
- (6) *Capital Facilities Planning Information and Access* – MDP indicates that capital budget duties were transferred to the Department of Budget and Management in 1989, and statute now specifies that MDP is the staff agency of the Governor for planning matters with the exception of capital facilities planning (§ 5-301(a) of the State Finance and Procurement Article).

- (7) *Authorized Funding for Regional Planning Projects* – MDP indicates there is no record of this funding being provided in the past and no expectation from M-NCPPC for the funding.
- (8) *Geographic Classification Standards* – MDP indicates that this requirement pre-dates the establishment of modern, international geographic information systems (GIS) standards. The Maryland Department of Information Technology’s GIS Professional Services provides statewide enterprise level GIS support and guidance on applicable standards.

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: SB 236 (Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee)(By Request - Departmental - Planning) - Education, Energy, and the Environment.

Information Source(s): Baltimore City; Harford, Montgomery, Talbot, and Wicomico counties; Maryland Association of Counties; cities of College Park and Frostburg; Maryland Municipal League; Maryland Department of the Environment; Maryland Department of Planning; Maryland State Board of Elections; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 19, 2025
km/sdk Third Reader - March 17, 2025
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ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC IMPACT ON SMALL BUSINESSES

TITLE OF BILL: Maryland Department of Planning - Modernization

BILL NUMBER: HB 272

PREPARED BY: Andrew Wilson, Maryland Department of Planning Government Affairs Specialist

PART A. ECONOMIC IMPACT RATING

This agency estimates that the proposed bill:

 X 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

SB 236/HB 272 contains a series of amendments and repeals targeting antiquated provisions of statute assigned to the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) over the past 35 years which are no longer needed or applicable. These specific amendments and repeals are targeted to improve efficiency and clarify expectations of the work MDP performs. No provision within this bill will have an economic impact on small businesses.