

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 610
Ways and Means

St. Mary's County - Gaming by Qualified Organization - License Required

This bill requires a qualified organization to hold a gaming license whenever the qualified organization conducts gaming in St. Mary's County in accordance with current law. The St. Mary's County Commissioners must designate a person (designee) to issue gaming licenses and may adopt regulations, in consultation with the designee, to administer and enforce authorized gaming activities.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: St. Mary's County expenditures may increase by approximately \$23,100 in FY 2027 and by approximately \$30,800 annually thereafter for a part-time employee to process gaming licenses. St. Mary's County revenues are not materially affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: A qualified organization in St. Mary's County may conduct a gaming event (a carnival, bazaar, or raffle) and may operate a gaming device (including a paddle wheel, a wheel of fortune, a chance book, bingo, Nevada card, and a stamp machine) for the exclusive benefit of a qualified organization if an individual or a group of individuals does not benefit financially from the gaming device or gaming event or receive any of the proceeds from the gaming device or gaming event for personal use or benefit. Qualified organizations include volunteer fire companies and *bona fide* religious, fraternal, civic, war

veterans', and charitable organizations. Members of qualified organizations must personally manage the operation of gaming devices and gaming events.

If a qualified organization uses a gaming device on a daily basis, the qualified organization may not operate more than five gaming devices and the premises in which the qualified organization operates the gaming device may not contain more than five gaming devices.

A qualified organization must keep accurate records of proceeds and expenditures involving gaming devices. On request, a qualified organization must allow the State's Attorney for the county, a State Police officer, the designee, and the sheriff or deputy sheriff to examine these records.

A qualified organization must have a bingo license to conduct bingo in St. Mary's County. The St. Mary's County Commissioners must designate a person to issue bingo licenses.

Local Fiscal Effect: It is unknown how many qualified organizations may acquire a gaming license under the bill. Based on gaming license activity in Calvert and Charles counties, St. Mary's County expects to issue a relatively significant number of licenses and therefore, is unable to administer gaming licenses with existing staff. Thus, St. Mary's County expenditures increase by approximately \$23,100 in fiscal 2027, which accounts for the bill's October 1, 2026 effective date, and by approximately \$30,800 annually thereafter for a part-time administrator to issue gaming licenses.

The bill does not explicitly grant the St. Mary's County Commissioners authority to establish application and licensing fees for gaming licenses. While St. Mary's County may impose existing fines on qualified organizations for violating gaming license requirements under the bill, the Department of Legislative Services assumes St. Mary's County revenues are not materially affected.

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: SB 357 (Senator Bailey) - Budget and Taxation.

Information Source(s): St. Mary's County; Comptroller's Office; Department of State Police; Maryland State Lottery and Gaming Control Agency; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 2, 2026
sj/jrb

Analysis by: Heather N. MacDonagh

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