HB 1360

Department of Legislative Services

Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1360 (Delegate Lehman, *et al.*)
Government, Labor, and Elections

Maryland Public Ethics Law - Regulated Lobbyists - Reporting Requirements

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This bill increases the number and frequency of lobbying activity reports that a regulated lobbyist must file electronically with the State Ethics Commission (SEC) each year. Additionally, the bill requires that the activity report include a list of each matter on which the regulated lobbyist performed lobbying activity, including (1) a description of the lobbyist's position on each matter and (2) each bill number or a description of each legislative action on which the lobbyist performed lobbying activity.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General and special fund expenditures each increase by $150,000 only in FY 2027 for contractual information technology (IT) programming costs. No effect on revenues.

(in dollars)	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
Revenues	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
GF Expenditure	150,000	0	0	0	0
SF Expenditure	150,000	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	($300,000)	$0	$0	$0	$0

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

Local Effect: Local governmental expenditures may increase minimally to conform local lobbying regulations to changes in State requirements. No effect on revenues.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary/Current Law: "Regulated lobbyist" means an entity that is required to register with SEC to act as a lobbyist, as specified under the Maryland Public Ethics Law (Title 5 of the General Provisions Article).

SEC administers a lobbying regulatory program including registration, disclosure, reporting and standards of conduct for executive, legislative and grassroots lobbying. The lobbyist standards are comprehensive and address a multitude of issues including contingent fees, campaign finance activity, improper encouragement of legislation, improper gifts, prohibitions against loans, concealment of clients, referrals by officials or employees to obtain lobbying clients, intentional misstatement of fact, and other fraudulent or illegal activities. More than 3,000 lobbying registrations are filed each year identifying the name of the lobbyist, the employer, and the topics of the activity to be lobbied.

By May 31 and November 30 of each year, a regulated lobbyist must file electronically a lobbying activity report with SEC that includes, among other things, specified total expenditures in connection with influencing executive or legislative action. *The bill* requires that a regulated lobbyist electronically file *two additional* activity reports with SEC no later than:

- February 15 each year to cover the period from November 1 of the immediately preceding year through January 31 of the current year (both inclusive); and
- March 15 of each year to cover the period from February 1 through the last day of February of that year (both inclusive).

Lobbyist Registration Fund

The Lobbyist Registration Fund is a special, nonlapsing fund administered by the State Treasurer. The fund consists of lobbyist registration fees collected by SEC and may be used to defray the expenses of administering the Maryland Public Ethics Law as it relates to lobbyist activity. Any balance remaining in the fund at the end of each fiscal year reverts to the general fund.

State Expenditures: To implement the bill, SEC must significantly update/reprogram its electronic lobbying reporting system and its lobbyist training system to reflect the bill's changes. The total cost to reprogram both systems is $300,000, which SEC advises will be split between general funds and the Lobbyist Registration Fund. Therefore, general and special fund expenditures by SEC each increase by $150,000 only in fiscal 2027 for contractual IT services to update the agency's lobbying registration and training systems.

Local Expenditures: SEC advises that the bill may increase expenditures for local governments due to costs associated with amending local lobbying provisions to match State provisions, as required by current law.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 1542 of 2025.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): State Ethics Commission; Department of Legislative Services

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caw/mcr

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