



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary
Allan Fisher, Deputy Secretary

Bill Number: SB 673

Short Title: Natural Resources Police Force – Employees – Authority of Secretary

Department's Position: Support with Amendments

Explanation of Department's Position

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR or Department) provides the following information on SB 673.

As amended, this bill grants the Secretary of DNR the authority to develop rules for the hiring and promotion of Natural Resources Police (NRP) Officers. The rules developed by the Secretary may, when necessary to improve the efficiency and effectiveness in establishing a highly qualified, diverse workforce of the highest character, supersede those in the Personnel and Pensions Article. It also provides basic frameworks for the appointment and promotion of NRP Officers to certain ranks, while providing the Secretary with the flexibility to declare certain ranks obsolete. In addition, it requires the Secretary to take certain actions with regard to improving the diversity of the sworn and civilian workforce of the NRP, so that it reflects the demographics of the state to the extent practicable. Efforts to achieve a more diverse workforce are to be directed toward strengthening the NRP Cadet Program, increasing recruitment efforts at Historically Black Colleges and Universities and establishment of a Diversity Study Group to identify barriers to diverse employment in NRP, as well as propose corrective actions. Finally, the bill requires the Secretary to develop, publish and regularly update a formal action plan to achieve specific and measurable goals to improve diversity among the NRP workforce. This action plan is to be reported to the General Assembly on or before December 1, 2022. **These measures are consistent with other state law enforcement agencies in Maryland.**

Police recruitment has become increasingly difficult in the past several years and this bill provides the Secretary with the flexibility and authority to utilize funding to hire a consultant specializing in both marketing and police recruiting. **The services of the consultant would be intended to enhance, rather than replace, current recruiting efforts to raise awareness amongst members of these communities of the opportunities and benefits of a career as a NRP Officer.**

For any additional information, please feel free to contact our Legislative and Constituent Services Director, Bunky Luffman.

Contact: Bunky Luffman, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services
Bunky.luffman1@maryland.gov ♦ 410-689-9165