

Senate Bill 516 Cannabis Reform

Maryland Fire & Rescue Institute's Position: Support with Amendments

Bill Summary: Among with other things, SB 516 sets up the framework to oversee the regulation of adult-use cannabis and establishes a licensing framework and graduated sales and use tax for the regulated sale of cannabis in Maryland.

Rationale:

- The implementation of cannabis reform in Maryland will likely impact public health and public safety. As many as 57 million instances of driving under the Influence of Cannabis are projected in Maryland each year, as well as other negative health outcomes for individuals, e.g., cannabis-induced suicidal ideations and psychotic or paranoid feelings¹. In states where cannabis was legalized coupled with retail sales, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety found that the rate of car crashes increased by nearly 6% and fatal car crashes increased by 4%, although changes in crash rates varied by state².
- There is a clear nexus between the projected increase in adult use of cannabis and potential use of Maryland's emergency medical services (EMS) system.
- Certain components of the State's EMS system are supported by Maryland EMS Operations Fund (MEMSOF)³:
 - Maryland State Police Aviation Command
 - Maryland Fire & Rescue Institute of the University of MD
 - R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center
 - Maryland Institute for EMS Systems (MIEMSS)
 - The Senator Amoss Fire, Rescue and Ambulance Fund that provides monies for the purchase of fire and rescue equipment and capital building improvements.
- Department of Legislative Services DLS has projected MEMSOF insolvency in FY24⁴. MEMSOF is currently supported by a \$29 biennial vehicle registration fee surcharge that has needed to be increased every 10 years since it is not sensitive to inflation. The last increase was in 2013.
- MIEMSS' amendment will permit a portion of the sales and tax revenues associated with the adult-use cannabis program should be used to support the Maryland EMS System funded through the MEMSOF.

Maryland Fire & Rescue Institute Supports SB 516 with Amendments and Asks for a Favorable Report¹

¹ Cannabis Public Policy Consulting. Future Adult Use Cannabis Demand & Predictive Modeling – A behavioral Economic Study. January 5, 2023. See: [https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/MDH/NMLMCC/HG13-4401\(b\)_2022\(d\).pdf](https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/MDH/NMLMCC/HG13-4401(b)_2022(d).pdf)

² Farmer CM, Monfort SS, Woods AN. Changes in Traffic Crash Rates after Legalization of Marijuana: Results by Crash Severity. J Stud Alcohol Drugs 2022 Jul; 83(4); 494-501.

³ § 13-955 Transp. Art., MD Code Ann.

⁴ See: [2024FY - Operating Budget Analysis - MEMSOF* - Maryland Emergency Medical System Operations Fund](#)

AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL 516
(First Reading File Bill)

On page 4, following line 11, insert new paragraph

“BY ADDING TO
ARTICLE – TRANSPORTATION
SECTION 19-355
ANNOTATED CODE OF MARYLAND
(2020 REPLACEMENT VOLUME AND 2022 SUPPLEMENT)”.

On page 80, following line 19, insert new paragraph

“(5) 1.0% TO THE MARYLAND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SYSTEM OPERATIONS FUND ESTABLISHED UNDER § 13-955 OF THE TRANSPORTATION ARTICLE;”.

On page 85, following line 27, insert

“Article – Transportation

13-955.

(a) In this section, “Fund” means the Maryland Emergency Medical System Operations Fund.

(b) (1) There is a Maryland Emergency Medical System Operations Fund.

(2) The Comptroller shall administer the Fund, including accounting for all transactions and performing year– end reconciliation.

(3) The Fund is a continuing, nonlapsing fund which is not subject to § 7–302 of the State Finance and Procurement Article.

(4) Interest and earnings on the Fund shall be separately accounted for and credited to the Fund, and are not subject to § 6–226(a) of the State Finance and Procurement Article.

(c) The Fund consists of:

(1) Registration surcharges collected under § 13–954 of this subtitle;

(2) All funds, including charges for accident scene transports and interhospital transfers of patients, generated by an entity specified in subsection (e) of this section that is a unit of State government; and

(3) Revenues distributed to the Fund from the surcharges collected under § 7–301(f) of the Courts Article.; AND

(4) REVENUES DISTRUBUTED TO THE FUND UNDER § 2-1302.2(5) OF THE TAX – GENERAL ARTICLE.

(d) Expenditures from the Fund shall be made pursuant to an appropriation approved by the General Assembly in the annual State budget or by the budget amendment procedure provided under § 7–209 of the State Finance and Procurement Article, provided that any budget amendment shall be submitted to and approved by the Legislative Policy Committee prior to the expenditure or obligation of funds.

(e) The money in the Fund shall be used solely for:

(1) Medically oriented functions of the Department of State Police, Support Service Bureau, Aviation Command;

(2) The Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems;

(3) The R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center at the University of Maryland Medical System;

(4) The Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute;

(5) The provision of grants under the Senator William H. Amoss Fire, Rescue, and Ambulance Fund in accordance with the provisions of Title 8, Subtitle 1 of the Public Safety Article; and

(6) The Volunteer Company Assistance Fund in accordance with the provisions of Title 8, Subtitle 2 of the Public Safety Article.”.