

SB0166_DNR_SUP_JPR_1-24-24.pdf

Uploaded by: Dylan Behler

Position: FAV



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Secretary
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

January 24, 2024

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 166 – First Reader

SHORT TITLE: Waterway Incident Notification System (WINS) Workgroup

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION

The Department is eager for the opportunity to participate in the Waterway Incident Notification System (WINS) Workgroup, to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a system of notifying mariners in times of emergency. Currently the only system for notifying mariners of an incident is through Marine Radio Channel 16, which is operated by the U.S. Coast Guard. Notification by this method requires that each vessel have a marine radio on board, which has become increasingly rare on small vessels since nearly everyone relies upon a cellular phone to summon assistance in times of need.

The Department is optimistic that the Workgroup will be able to identify an efficient and modern system for public notification of maritime emergencies, such as vessels in distress or overdue for arrival, vessel accidents, missing persons and sudden severe storms. This type of system would have a profound impact on the boating public's awareness of emergencies in their immediate vicinity, allowing them to avoid a storm, to assist a person or vessel in distress, and/or provide a more precise location of the emergency to first responders. Ultimately, this would, through timely notifications, decrease the number of storm related emergencies, and improve the likelihood of survivability for victims of maritime emergencies.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Many jurisdictions nationwide have methods of contacting the public during times of emergency, however, these are largely oriented toward land based political subdivision or zip code. There is no current mass maritime notification system in Maryland.

BILL EXPLANATION

This bill establishes a Waterways Incident Notification System Workgroup, and establishes the membership of that Workgroup, to evaluate the feasibility of a notification system for the purpose of alerting mariners to emergencies on Maryland waters.

Contact: Dylan Behler, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services
dylan.behler@maryland.gov ♦ 410-260-8113 (office) ♦ 443-924-0891 (cell)

SenatorBailey_FAV_SB166.pdf

Uploaded by: Jack Bailey

Position: FAV

JACK BAILEY
Legislative District 29
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties

Budget & Taxation Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 401
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3673 • 301-858-3673
800-492-7122 Ext. 3673
Jack.Bailey@senate.state.md.us

District Office
Dorsey Professional Park
23680 Three Notch Road, Unit 101
Hollywood, Maryland 20636
240-309-4238

January 24, 2024

Senate Bill 166 – Waterway Incident Notification System (WINS) Workgroup

Dear Chairman Smith and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to introduce Senate Bill 166, which would establish the Waterway Incident Notification System (WINS) Workgroup.

This workgroup would study the feasibility of establishing a Waterway Incident Notification System to notify members of the public of active waterway emergencies involving a person at risk of death or serious bodily harm, emergency marine events, or marine hazards. This legislation has been introduced in response to a number of recent incidents in our State's waterways and is intended to improve the ability of members of the public to be aware of these serious emergencies in the water in their area, both for their own safety and also so that they can assist in locating individuals reported as missing.

After discussions with the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM), we have determined that the best way to move forward is by forming a workgroup. This legislation will bring together representatives of MDEM, the Natural Resources Police, the Department of Information Technology, the Department of the Environment, the 9-1-1 Board, and local emergency management officials, and members of the General Assembly to determine the best way to create and implement such a system.

The deadline for the final report is September 30, 2025, with an interim report due on December 31, 2024 for any recommendations that the workgroup may have that can be considered at the next legislative session. This bill is identical to Senate Bill 336 from last year as it passed this Committee and the full Senate.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 166. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Bailey".

Senator Jack Bailey

SB 166 MDE SUP PS .docx - Google Docs.pdf

Uploaded by: Les Knapp

Position: FAV



**The Maryland Department of the Environment
Secretary Serena McIlwain**

SB 0166

Waterway Incident Notification System (WINS) Workgroup

Position: Support
Committee: Judicial Proceedings Committee
Date: January 23, 2024
From: Les Knapp

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE or the Department) **SUPPORTS** SB 166. The bill creates a workgroup to study the feasibility of establishing a Waterway Incident Notification System (WINS) to notify members of the public of certain waterway emergencies.

WINS would notify members of the public, including recreational boaters and commercial watermen, of active waterway emergencies involving a person at risk of death or serious bodily harm, emergency marine events, or marine hazards. This includes certain environmental emergencies, such as hazardous substance spills.

The workgroup's membership consists of state legislators, state and local emergency management personnel, and representatives from the Maryland Departments of the Environment, Emergency Management and Information Technology. The Department of Emergency Management shall provide staff for the workgroup.

Considering the feasibility of enhancing public notification systems for environmental and other marine hazards benefits and protects the residents of Maryland. Accordingly, MDE urges a **FAVORABLE** report for SB 166.