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March 6, 2026

House Bill 1360 – Maryland Public Ethics Law – Regulated Lobbyists – Reporting Requirements

Testimony Before the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

The State Ethics Commission provides this informational written testimony to explain the impact of this proposed legislation on the agency. This proposed legislation will have both a significant fiscal impact of approximately \$300,000 and a significant operational impact on the State Ethics Commission. The State Ethics Commission will be required to make substantial changes to its existing electronic lobbying registration and reporting system, resulting in a major overhaul with the current IT vendor, to include the new requirements of this legislation. The last significant lobbying system work occurred in 2019 and cost the agency approximately \$223,000. The State Ethics Commission estimates that the required system changes will cost approximately \$275,00 with its current system vendor. Additionally, this legislation will require numerous changes to its electronic lobbyist training module to include these legislative changes and requirements. The State Ethics Commission estimates that these significant changes to the lobbying training module will cost approximately \$25,000. These services are performed by two outside IT vendors. The State Ethics Commission will also be required to change its existing lobbying regulations, local government lobbying regulations, local government Model Laws, agency lobbying memos and guidance and lobbying forms to reflect all changes included in this legislation.

This legislation may also have both an operational and fiscal impact on local governments. Local governments may amend local lobbying provisions if there are changes to State lobbying provisions. This local government impact may affect counties, local boards of education, and municipalities required to include lobbying provisions in their local ethics laws, ordinances, and policies. Additionally, this legislation may impact small businesses that include registered lobbyists, lobbying firms, or entities that engage registered lobbyists on their behalf. The impact may include expenses related to additional and more frequent lobbying reporting requirements.