

RMC Legislative Committee
February 27, 2017
2pm-3pm
Conference Call
Meeting Minutes

Participants:

Odette Ramos, Co-Chair

Lindsay Thompson, Co-Chair

Josh Hastings

Alice Settle-Raskins

Mike Pennington

Lara Wilson

Bill Christopher

RMC Staff:

Kelly Dudeck

Charlotte Davis, Executive Director

Joanne Richart-Young

Meredith Donaho, Program Administrator

Matt Teffeau

The meeting was called to order at approximately 3:05 pm.

Review of February 27, 2017 Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the February 27, 2017 Legislative Committee were reviewed. No recommendations were made. The minutes were unanimously accepted.

Legislative Tracking

Several item requests for the Legislation Committee to review included:

- **HB 779/SB 719 – Conserving Working Waterfront Farms Act of 2017.** The bill's sponsor, Delegate Mautz, requested the RMC to take a position, the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) has taken an opposition to the bill. The Committee recommended no position at this time.
- **HB 807/SB 611 – Health Occupations – Requirements for the Practice of Optometry – Miscellaneous Revisions.** The bill will change the scope of work for optometrists to improve the access to vision health in rural areas. The Committee recommended to wait for additional information prior to taking a position.
- **HB 1306 – Cable Service – Broadband Connection Requirement – Enforcement.** A request was made by the bill's sponsor, Delegate Fisher, for the RMC to take a position. The bill is similar to a bill that was introduced last year. The Committee recommended that a letter of information be submitted.
- **HB 1313 – Public Utilities – Telephone Companies – Wired Broadband (Wired Broadband Act of 2017).** A request was made by the bill's sponsor, Delegate Fisher, for the RMC to take a position. The bill is similar to legislation that was introduced last year. The Committee recommended a letter of information to be submitted. The RMC will also be convening an event in May on rural broadband access in partnership with the USDA, this information will be included in the letters of information for HB 1313 and HB 1306.
- **SB 463 – Business Regulation – Limited Residential Lodging.** A request was made by Smith Island United to review and provide support for the bill. The Committee recommended continued monitoring.

Several other bills were identified for discussion, including:

- **SB 716 - Admissions and Amusement Tax - Exemption - Agricultural Tourism and Promotion of Agricultural Products.** There was some concern to the Committee as to the definition of “agri-tourism”, and if the definition would be fully encompassing of all types of agri-tourism. The Committee recommended that the Council reach out to agriculture tourism groups to learn of their position of the bill, and to continue monitoring.
- **HB 1169/SB 717 - Task Force on Internet, Wireless, and Cellular Service on the Eastern Shore.** The Committee recommended a letter of support be submitted.
- **HB 1112/SB 720 - Sales and Use Tax - Exemption - All-Terrain or Utility-Terrain Vehicles for Agricultural Purposes.** There was agreement that many farmers do support the bill and it is beneficial for agriculture. The Committee recommended a letter of support be submitted.
- **SB 730 - Higher Education - Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program – Farmers.** There was concern regarding the bill’s source of funding, the Maryland Department of Agriculture has submitted a letter of information. The Committee recommended continued monitoring.
- **SB796 - Economic Development - County Economic Development Tax Incentives Program and One Maryland Tax Credit.** A comparison chart of economic development tax credits, including the More Jobs for Marylanders Act and the Department of Commerce’s tiered tax credits, will be made available for the next Legislative Committee meeting. HB 1007/SB 364 - One Maryland Economic Development Tax Credits - Business Incubators, Enterprise Zones, and Regional Institution Strategic Enterprise Zones, will also be included in the comparison chart.
- **HB 1514/SB 812 - Housing and Community Development - Community Development Program Act.** The Committee recommended a letter of support with amendment to remove the funding source be submitted.
- **HB 1168/SB 957 - Counties and Municipalities - Land Bank Authorities.** The Committee recommended support testimony to be submitted.
- **SB 1103 - Home Sprinkler and Fire Safety Assistance Fund.** The Committee recommended a letter of support to be submitted.

Other Updates

- Rural Caucus Meeting will be held Thursday, March 2, 2017 in Room 142, House Office Building. Maryland Department of Agriculture Secretary Joe Bartenfelder will be speaking.

No other issues or business were discussed.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:45 pm.

Next meeting: Monday, March 13, 2017, 3pm-4pm, Conference Call