

RMC Legislative Committee
February 6, 2017
3pm-4pm
Conference Call
Meeting Minutes

Participants:

Josh Hastings
Steve McHenry
Lara Wilson
Kim Kratovil
Don Mulrine
Odette Ramos
Bill Christopher
Kelly Dudeck

Doris Mason
Rick Pollitt

RMC Staff:
Charlotte Davis, Executive Director
Meredith Donaho, Program Administrator

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

Review of January 23, 2017 Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the January 23, 2017 Legislative Committee were reviewed. Recommendations were made to include the names of Bill Christopher and Kelly Dudeck who participated on the call to the participant list. The minutes with the recommendation were unanimously accepted.

Overview of the 2017 Legislative Priorities

Chairman Hastings announced that the next Legislative Committee will be led by two new co-chairs, Odette Ramos and Lindsay Thompson.

Legislative Tracking

The Rural Maryland Council has submitted two letters of support for HB0002/SB0014 – Earned Income Tax Credit – Individuals Without Qualifying Children – Expansion, sponsored by Delegate Hixson and Senator Madaleno.

The Council also provided written support testimony for the following:

- HB223 – Sales and Use Tax Exemption – Electricity Consumption by Small Business Located in Qualified Distressed County, sponsored by Delegate McKay;
- HB 267/SB 257 – Program Open Space – Authorized Transfer to the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Financing Fund – Increase, sponsored by Delegate Wilson and Senator Kasemeyer;
- HB 552 – Transportation – Motor Fuel Tax and Highway User Revenue – Increased Local Share, sponsored by Delegate Parrott;
- SB 273 – State Forest, State Park, and Wildlife Management Area Revenue Equity Program, sponsored by Senator Edwards

The Council also drafted letters of support for the following:

- SB 161 – Transportation – Highway User Revenues – Allocation, sponsored by Senator Waugh

Copies of the written support testimony and letters of support were provided for the Committee to review. The Committee recommended that a sentence be added to the support testimony for HB267/

SB 257 to include that at least full funding for Program Open Space be provided. It was also suggested that the Council change the position on SB 161 to continue monitoring the bill instead of submitting a letter of support.

The Council will continue to monitor SB 116 – Program Open Space – Attainment of Acquisition Goals – Local Government Apportionment and Use of Funds, sponsored by Senator Edwards. The Council will also continue to monitor rural health bills. It was suggested that SB169 – Health – Cost of Emergency Room Visits to Treat Dental Conditions – Study, also be monitored.

The Council is working to obtain more information on the following to determine position:

- HB 204 – Community Colleges – Small Community Colleges – Funding, sponsored by Delegate Krebs;
- SB 278 – Maryland Farms and Families Act, sponsored by Senator Middleton

More information on these bills will be presented at the next Committee meeting.

It was also suggested that the Council support HB384/ SB 343 – Bay Restoration Fund – Eligible Costs – Expansion, sponsored by Delegate Adams and Senator Eckardt. The Committee was in agreement to provide support, and written support testimony will be provided for the bills. As well, it was suggested the Council support HB472/ SB416 – Income Tax Credit – Qualified Farms – Food Donation Pilot Program, sponsored by Delegate Jameson and Senator Middleton. The Committee agreed to provide support, and a letter of support will be drafted.

Other Updates

- Rural Maryland Day is Thursday, February 9th, 8:30am -2pm, and the 2017 “Taste of the Eastern Shore” Legislative Event will be held on February 9th, 5pm-9pm, at the Loews Annapolis Hotel.

No other issues or business was discussed.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:40 pm.

Next meeting: Rescheduled for Monday, February 27, 2017, 2pm-3pm, Conference Call