



## RMC Legislative Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: January 25, 2021

Time: 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Type: Zoom Teleconference

Participants: Bill Valentine, Chris Benzing, Sherwin Wells, Alice Settle-Raskin, Erroll Mattox, John Hartline, Kurt Fuchs, Senator Addie Eckardt, Kelly Dudeck, Janice Palmer, Scott Warner, Josh Hastings, Lara Wilson, Darren Jarboe, Suzanne Zilberfarb, Greg Padgham, Dakota Matthews, Don Mulrine, Cassie Shirk, John Venditta, Bill Christopher, Lindsay Thompson, Steve McHenry, Kimberly Kratovil, Dan Rider, Jennifer Witten, Tyler Patton, Charlotte Davis, Dakota Matthews, Amanda Clevenger, Megan D'Arcy.

### I. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Chris Benzing welcomed everyone to the meeting at 2:05pm.

### II. Review of January 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Chris Benzing asked if there were any problems, suggestions, or changes to the minutes and asked if there were any objections. Senator Addie Eckardt stated that there was a typo in her name and asked for it to be corrected. Mr. Benzing asked for a motion to accept the minutes. Senator Eckardt moved to accept the minutes; Mr. Don Mulrine seconded. The motion passed with the spelling correction was approved.

### III. Budget Releases

Mr. Benzing turned the meeting over to Ms. Charlotte Davis to discuss the FY2022 budget release. Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that there will be a fiscal briefing at 3:00pm today and that the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund was highlighted in the Governor's Highlights and that the fund received a \$1M cut and is now at \$5M from \$6M. MAERDAF received a slight haircut to \$118K to \$167K. Ms. Davis said it was important to note that other agencies and entities received cuts from the budget, so we are not standing apart. Ms. Davis highlighted that RMC's budget hearing is on February 11<sup>th</sup>, the same day as Rural Maryland Day and we will see if the Department of Legislative Services has anything for RMC.

#### Bill Tracking

- a) HB0123/SB0003-Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2021, Hearing 1/27: Chris Benzing stated that this is a bill that we have supported in the past, that provides insurance coverage to things that are happening online virtually across the state. Additional key points discussed include an important provision that removes the restriction on requiring the provider to have to go to a clinical site and allows patient to be in their safe location-at home, in a shelter, or at work to receive their services. Mr. Benzing asked for a motion. Senator Eckardt moved to accept the motion; Mr. John Hartline seconded. Mr. Benzing asked if anyone opposed, anyone sustained. There was none. The motion passed for the Legislative Committee to approve testimony to be submitted for HB0123/SB0003.
- b) HB0191/0056-Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Psychiatrist and Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Telemedicine Reimbursement – Sunset Termination, Hearing 1/27: Senator Eckardt stated that the purpose of the bill is to remove the sunset because the program has worked so well and they want to keep it. Mr. Benzing asked for a motion. Lara Wilson accepted the motion;

Senator Eckardt seconded. Mr. Benzing asked if anyone opposed, if anyone was voting present. *Darren Jarboe stated that he must abstain from all votes as he can't advocate.* The motion passed for the Legislative Committee to approve testimony to be submitted for HB0191/SB0056.

- c) SB0393/HB0551-Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance – Coverage and Reimbursement of Telehealth Services, Hearing 1/27: Mr. Benzing stated that this bill supports the Governor's initiative to make health care more accessible and increases the number of people working in the health care industry. The committee discussed the provisions in the bill were similar to SB0003 but this one is different as it is specific on insuring, different ways to deliver behavioral health services, substance abuse disorder, counseling support and it adds certain protections. Mr. Benzing asked for a motion to send in support testimony. Senator Eckardt accepted the motion; Jennifer Witten seconded. Mr. Benzing asked if anyone opposed, anyone abstaining other than *Darren Jarboe*. There was none. The motion passed for the Legislative Committee to approve testimony to be submitted for SB0393/HB0551.
- d) HB0474-Income Tax Credit – Wineries and Vineyards – Sunset Extension, Hearing 1/28: Mr. Benzing stated that the bill extends the termination of the sunset for a credit against state income tax until June 2026 for wineries and vineyards. Ms. Lindsay Thompson stated that Grow and Fortify and the Maryland Wineries Association are supporting the bill and that wineries have been a great success story from a rural economic agritourism standpoint. Ms. Thompson moved to support the bill; Senator Eckardt seconded. Mr. Benzing asked if anyone opposed, anyone abstaining other than *Darren Jarboe*. There was none. The motion passed for the Legislative Committee to approve testimony to be submitted for HB0474.
- e) SB0362/HB0649-Transportation – Highway User Revenues – Revenue and Distribution, Hearing 2/02: Ms. Davis stated that Highway User Funds have been a MACO and MML priority. This is the portion of the gas tax that is shared with local governments to relate to their highway user needs and was cut several years ago. This bill reinstates that a % of this tax be directed for this use. Mr. Don Mulrine made the motion to support; Mr. Tyler Patton seconded. Mr. Benzing asked if there was any additional discussion, anyone opposed, anyone except the regular abstaining. There was none. The motion passed for the Legislative Committee to approve testimony to be submitted for SB0362/HB0649.
- f) HB0434-Public Health – Telehealth – Health Care Practitioners and the Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Hearing 2/10: Mr. Benzing stated that this bill relates to a providers use of audio-only call to provide certain services. Mr. Benzing asked that we get a motion to submit testimony. Senator Eckardt accepted the motion; Ms. Alice Settle-Raskin seconded. Mr. Benzing asked if anyone opposed, anyone except the regular abstaining. There was none. The motion passed for the Legislative Committee to approve testimony to be submitted for HB 0434.

#### V. Other Business :

- Ms. Davis reported to the committee that the Executive Committee along with additional stakeholders met last Thursday, 1/21 at 11:00 am to discuss HB0097/SB0066 and HB0043. They did come to a consensus to support with amendments to be to sent to the sponsors. The consensus of the stakeholders is that that these bills are codifying the Office of Broadband into statute that ensures its continuity and stability into the future, so we want to support that effort. Ms. Davis will testify on both of the house bills.
- Ms. Davis announced that Rural Maryland Day, February 11<sup>th</sup> and a registration will be sent out shortly and encouraged participants to sign up.
- Mr. Dan Rider requested of the committee to review SB0065. Mr. Rider believes the intent of the bill was to eliminate black liquor but the way it is currently worded would eliminate all wood. Mr. Rider informed the committee that DNR joined with MEA with a support with amendment which was spelled out at the hearing. Ms. Davis stated that the Committee had it marked as monitor as

it was thought to only apply to black liquor but if this is incorrect then we need to change that to support with an amendment. Senator Eckardt moved to accept; Don Mulrine seconded. Mr. Benzing asked if there was any further discussion, anyone opposed, anyone except the regular abstaining. There was none. The motion passed for the Legislative Committee to move SB0065 from monitor to support with an amendment and a letter to the chair will be sent since the hearing has passed.

VI. Adjourn

Mr. Benzing informed the committee that the next meeting will be February 8<sup>th</sup> at 2pm. Mr. Benzing asked for a meeting to adjourn. Don Mulrine accepted the motion, Matt Tefteau seconded. The meeting adjourned at 2:52pm.