



RMC Legislative Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: March 15, 2021

Time: 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Type: Zoom Teleconference

Participants: John Hartline, Chris Benzing, Charlotte Davis, Cassie Shirk, Tyler Patton, Janice Palmer, Senator Addie Eckhardt, Kurt Fuchs, Alice Settle-Raskin, Amanda Clevenger, Cody Matthews, Lenny Pfeffer, Lara Wilson, Greg Padgham, Scott Warner, Kelly Dudeck, Sherwin Wells, Susanne Zilberfarb, Josh Hastings, Matt Tefteau, Don Mulrine, Wendy Stringfellow, Lindsay Thompson, Steve McHenry, Dan Rider, Megan D'Arcy

Welcome and Introductions.

Ms. Lindsay Thompson welcomed everyone to the meeting and conducted the roll call. The meeting was called to order at 2:03pm.

Review of March 1, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Ms. Lindsay Thompson asked participants to review the minutes and asked if there were any corrections that had to be made prior to acceptance. There were none. Minutes were unanimously approved

Bill Tracking Review

- SB965/HB1372: Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Revisions (*Senate Hearing & House Hearing, 3/15*)- Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that this bill relates to Kirwan and increases to the funding formula. She did not think the Committee needed to take position but recommended to monitor it. Ms. Lindsay Thompson stated that in the past, the Committee echoed MACo and the equity for funding education in rural areas. Ms. Thompson asked if anyone come across any questions or concerns, the Committee can retroactively submit a letter of information.
- SB966: Virtual Schools – Statewide Education Platform – Procurement and Establishment (*Recently Introduced*). Ms. Lindsay Thompson stated that this bill authorizes MSDE to procure a virtual school platform on a year-round basis with an issue of request by May 1, 2021. Ms. Thompson stated that the impetus behind this is that some form of virtual school will start in the fall of 2021. Ms. Charlotte Davis had a concern on the impact this bill may have on the closing of small rural schools. Mr. Scott Warner state that the Committee needed to get input from what the rural school are already doing and check in with their Health Officers. The Committee decided to monitor the bill and check with the Maryland Association of Boards of Education and the Eastern Shore of Maryland Educational Consortium.
- SB571/HB736: Interstate Licensed Professional Counselors Compact (*House Bill-Third Reading Passed*)-Ms. Lindsay Thompson stated that the Committee supported this bill, and they are moving in both chambers.
- SB3/HB123: Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2021 (*Senate Version Passed the Senate/House Version Passed the House*). Ms. Lindsay Thompson state that the Committee supported this bill and that it is moving in both chambers. Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that there was an amendment to sunset the audio portion in three years.
- SB710/HB73: State and Local Government and Public Institutions of Higher Education – Teleworking (*House Bill Passed 3rd Reading*): Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that this was a mandate to require everyone to require teleworking. Ms. Davis did hear a concern from Garrett County regarding this bills impact to State regional office and the public access piece. Mr. Lenny Pfeffer stated that MACo asked that the bill language be changed from 'must' to 'may' in requiring telework. The Committee decided to submit a letter of concern.
- SB673/HB269: Department of Agriculture – Urban Agriculture Grant Program (*Senate and House Passed with Amendments*). Ms. Lindsay Thompson reviewed the amendments which strike the funding source, removing the

cap of \$400k, add the plan language, allow for a general fund allocation by the Governor and consideration to historically disadvantaged farmers. Ms. Thompson asked the Committee if there were any concerns. There were no concerns.

- SB692/HB860: State Planning – Preservation of Agricultural Land – Goal (*Senate Version-Second Reading Passed with Amendments and House Version-Third Reading Passed with amendments-different amendments*). Ms. Lindsay Thompson stated the difference in the amendments dealt with the program themes. Mr. Steve McHenry stated that the amendments pertain to the uncodified language and program clarification that includes-Maryland Environmental Trust and the Next Generation program.
- SB474/HB384: Real Property – Sale of Mobile Home Parks – Notice Requirements (*Senate Favorable Report, Passed the House*). Ms. Lindsay Thompson provide a background on the bill that requires a 30-day notification rather than 5-day notification and stated that it received a favorable report in the Senate and passed in the House.
- SB102/HB1252: Income Tax – Credits for Preceptors in Areas with Health Care Workforce Shortages (*Senate Bill Passed, heard in the House on 3/25, House Bill to be Heard at the Senate, Date TBA*). Ms. Lindsay Thompson provide an update on the bill's status.
- SB119/HB507: Clean Water Commerce Act of 2021 (*Senate Bill Passed Third Reading, House Bill Favorable w/ Amendments Report by Environment and Transportation*). Ms. Lindsay Thompson stated that this bill establishes the Clean Water Commerce Account with the Bay Restoration Fund and provided the bill status.
- SB414/HB583: Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021 (*Senate Version Passed Third Reading*). Ms. Lindsay Thompson provided a status on the bill and that we are monitoring it.

Other

Ms. Lindsay Thompson asked if there were any updates from the Committee. Ms. Charlotte Davis asked Committee members if there were any updates to the SB65 and SB549. Mr. Dan Rider stated that it appears the bill is going to pass with the amendments that clarifies the removal of black liquor but retains mill residues. SB549 clarifies qualifying biomass other than animal manure to be eligible for renewable energy credits and includes biomass which would be beneficial to the forestry industry as it moves biomass from a waste stream to a product stream. Mr. Steve McHenry stated that there are a lot of folks working on the bill right now and the subcommittee will take the bill up again this week.

Ms. Charlotte Davis provided an update on the budget and the COVID relief package coming to Maryland. Ms. Davis stated the House appropriations committee will make the decisions this afternoon at 5pm and subcommittees last week. In regard to the COVID relief package, Mr. Steve McHenry stated that he did not see a clear nexus to the new money but it may be coming to existing obligations that the State has had backfilled, which may take the pressure off. Ms. Thompson stated that is what is consistent to what they have heard in the agricultural community. Mr. Sherwin offered a suggestion for funding nonprofit agricultural organizations in the State in regard to the type of 990s that are required when applying for grant funds. Ms. Davis stated the RMC accepts all forms of 990 forms-Forms 990, 990-EZ and 990-N. Mr. Lenny Pfeffer informed the Committee that the federal money coming in right now to the Counties is being divided among the County and Municipalities. For example, Dorchester is getting \$20M and \$6M is going to the County itself and Cambridge is getting \$10M. Mr. Pfeffer was very thankful for these funds but wanted to make it clear that they may not be able to assist with has many needs as they are only receive a portion of the funds. Mr. Pfeffer stated that schools and transportation are getting their own money and it is unclear on how the money can be used.

Adjourn

The Committee decided to meet again on March 22, 2021. Ms. Charlotte Davis asked if there was anything else for the good of the order. Mr. Chris Benzing made a motion to adjourn, Don Mulrine seconded. The meeting adjourned at 2:58pm.

Next Meeting: Monday, March 22, 2021, 2pm-3pm, Zoom Teleconference