



RMC Legislative Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: March 22, 2021

Time: 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Type: Zoom Teleconference

Participants: Susan O'Neill, Scott Warner, Don Mulrine, Janice Palmer, Greg Padgham, Alice Settle-Raskin, John Hartline, Bill Christopher, Debbie Bowden, Josh Bollinger, Matt Tefteau, Amanda Clevenger, Dakota Matthews, Steve McHenry, Chris Benzing, Susanne Zilberfarb, Charlotte Davis, Megan D'Arcy.

Welcome and Introductions: Mr. Chris Benzing called the meeting to order at 2:04pm.

Review of March 15, 2021 Meeting Minutes: Mr. Chris Benzing asked Committee members to review the minutes from the last meeting, March 15, 2021. Mr. Benzing asked if anyone had anything to add, subtract or disagree with. There were none and Mr. Benzing asked that the approval of the minutes be included in today's minutes.

Legislative Tracking: Mr. Chris Benzing stated that the following bills listed are for updates only and not questions and there are a handful that the Committee did not take a position on. Mr. Benzing stated the status of each of the following bills and Ms. Charlotte Davis and other committee members provided additional information as pertinent.

- SB66/HB97: Department of Housing and Community Development-Office of Digital Inclusion – Established (Senate Status: Third Reading Passed and referred to Economic Matters in the House/House Status: First Reading in Economic Matters, 1/26) *RMC Position: Support with Amendment-Written Testimony.* Ms. Charlotte Davis stated the amendment pertained to 1) restoring the rural broadband assistance fund 2) keeping the intent of the office-to plan, design, and construct broadband infrastructure, 3) remove mapping responsibility, 4) date change from 2022 to 2021. Ms. Davis stated that the bill has been held twice now and that there is bipartisan concern from the rural legislators about the benefit to rural and why they should vote for it. Ms. Davis stated that the bill is important because it codifies the office, but it does not address affordability. She further stated that the Council continues to push that we are supporting with amendments.
- SB824/HB1328: Economic Development – Broadband Providers – Joint Trenching and Fee (Senate Status: Third reading passed with Amendments and referred to the House, Economic Matters/House Status: First Reading in Economic Matters, 3/4) *RMC Position: Support with Amendment-Written & Oral Testimony.* Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that the amendments were adopted in the Senate bill, which included keeping the rural broadband assistance fund where it was and the Committee suggested to limit the fee, which was clarified to state that any fee generated had to support broadband. Ms. Davis further stated that the bill is still facing uncertainty in the House, Economic Matters Committee.
- SB857/HB1280: Health – Maryland Behavioral and Public Safety Center of Excellence – Establishment (Senate Status: Third Reading Passed with Amendments & referred to Health & Government Operations in the House/House Status: Third Reading Passed in the House) *RMC Position: Support -Written & Oral Testimony.* Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that they included the amendments that the Committee asked for that included funding for rural communities as well as the local improvement coalitions. Ms. Davis further stated that these were both identical amendments in the House and the Senate.
- SB13/HB1193: Certified Nursing Assistants – Certified Renewal – Training Program Requirements (Senate Status: Third reading passed and referred to Health & Gov't Operations, hearing on 3/24 canceled/House Status: Third Reading Passed in the House) *RMC Position: Support -Written Testimony.* Mr. Chris Benzing stated that it passed both sides and Ms. Charlotte Davis stated it looked solid going forward.

- SB549/~~HB862~~. Corrected to HB682: Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard – Thermal Biomass Systems (Senate Status: First Reading in Finance/House Status: Referred to summer study in Economic Matters). Ms. Charlotte stated that HB682 is dead and referred to a summer study. The bills related to removing black liquor from the renewable portfolio standard with the amendments suggested by the Committee to retain the mill residue is progressing forward but the piece with the food waste is not. Mr. Steve McHenry stated that the House subcommittee did not have the bandwidth to work on amendments, which is the reason for the summer study.
- SB65/HB875: Electricity – Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard – Qualifying Biomass (Senate Status: Passed out of Senate and referred to Economic Matters in the House/House Status: Passed out of the House to Finance in the Senate. Contains Amendments) *RMC Position: Support with Amendment- Letter to the Chair*. Ms. Charlotte Davis said the amendments are what the Committee asked for.
- SB821/HB1232: Alcoholic Beverages – Manufacturer’s Licenses and Off-Site Permits (Senate Status: Passed out of the Senate and referred to Economic Matters in the House/House Status: Third Reading Passed) *RMC Position: Support -Written Testimony*. Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that the amendments differ from the House version and the Senate version. The Senate sunsets only the delivery portion, while the House version sunsets the whole thing in two years so it will have to be resolved in conference.
- HB588: Budget Bill -Fiscal Year 2022 (House Status: Third reading passed with amendments and referred to Budget & Taxation in the Senate) *RMC Position: Support -Written Testimony*. Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that the Senate will be moving this evening and she did not see any cuts to our budget. Ms. Davis reported that for FY2021, RMC was approved to disburse the \$400,000 retainer and staff will start disbursing remaining funds in the next two weeks. Ms. Davis provided an update on the Program Open Space repayment - it was rejected by the Senate but they changed it so it will go to conference. Ms. Davis further stated that \$3M was taken for the lake restoration fund.
- SB830/HB1148: Secretary of Health – School Based Health Centers – Guidelines and Administration of Grants (Senate Status: Passed out of the Senate and referred to Health & Government Operations Ways & Means in the House/Second reading passed in the Senate/House Status: Favorable adopted second reading passed) *RMC Position: Monitor*. Ms. Charlotte stated that RMC supports school-based health centers and that the Council wants to see more money go to rural schools so they can have their own health centers.
- SB493/HB589: Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2021 (Senate Status: First reading Budget & Taxation in the Senate/House Status: Passed out of the House and referred to Budget & Taxation in the Senate) *RMC Position: Support -Written Testimony RMC Position: Monitor*. Ms. Charlotte stated that she testified in support of the BRFA related the Program Open Space repayment and deferring it for 1 year and that the Committee was against eliminating the repayment all together.
- SB278/HB34: State Department of Education and Maryland Department of Health – Maryland School – Based Health Center Standards – Telehealth (Senate Status: Passed out of the Senate & referred to Health & Government Operations Ways & Means, hearing on 3/25 canceled/ House Status: Passed out of the House and referred to Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs in the Senate) *RMC Position: Monitor*. Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that the bills are moving.
- HB317: Maryland Green Purchasing Committee: Food and Beverage Procurement – Greenhouse Gas Emissions (House Status: Third Reading Passed) *RMC Position: None*. Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that this was being highlighted as there were some amendments that concerned the poultry industry related to procurement as this bill would quantify the transportation costs of produce, which is an issue for poultry. Mr. Steve McHenry stated that Farm Bureau and other agricultural organizations are concerned about it. Ms. Cassie Shirk stated that MDA is not getting involved in it, but they are monitoring it.
- SB678/HB884: Task Force on the Economic Future of Western Maryland – Extension of Report Deadline and Task Force (Senate Status: Passed out of the Senate and referred to Ways and Means in the House, hearing 3/25 canceled/House Status: Passed out of the House and referred to Budget & Taxation in the Senate) *RMC Position: None*.
- SB965/HB1372: Blueprint for Maryland’s Future – Revisions (Senate Status: Referred to Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs and Budget & Taxation in the Senate/House Status: Third reading passed in the House) *RMC Position: None*. Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that she brought this up last week and she learned that the Maryland

Association of Boards of Education was not taking a position on it. Ms. Davis further stated that a part of the revisions increases the dollar amount per pupil by \$200 to cover broadband connectivity, devices and technology for students.

- SB966 Virtual Schools – Statewide Education Platform – Procurement and Establishment (Senate Status: referred to Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs in the Senate) *RMC Position: None*. Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that we are waiting and trying to get more information.

Other

Mr. Chris Benzing asked Committee Members if there were other bills they would like to discuss. There were none. Ms. Charlotte Davis provided information of the Maryland Day Grab & Go lunch for legislators in honor of Maryland Day at Lawyers Mall that will take place from 11am to 1pm on March 25th. Ms. Davis further stated that there will be a short program with the Lieutenant Governor Rutherford and Secretary Haddaway-Riccio.

Adjourn

Mr. Chris Benzing asked if there were any other items for the good of the order. There were none. Ms. Alice Settle-Raskin made the motion to adjourn, Mr. Don Mulrine seconded.

Next Meeting: Monday, April 5, 2021, 2 pm-3 pm, via zoom