



RMC Legislative Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: January 18, 2021

Time: 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Type: Zoom Teleconference

Participants: Chris Benzing, Sherwin Wells, Dakota Matthews, Charlotte Davis, Megan D’Arcy, Debbie Bowden, Amanda Clevenger, Cassie Shirk, Tony Thakur, John Hartline, John Venditta, Bill Christopher, Kurt Fuchs, Wilbur Levensgood, Lindsay Thompson, Josh Hastings, Alice Settle Raskin, Senator Addie Eckhardt, Delegate Mike McKay, Susanne Zilberfarb, Scott Warner, Steve McHenry, Tyler Patton, Penny Packer, Wendy Stringfellow, Sherwin Wells.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Charlotte Davis completed the roll call at 2:03pm. Chris Benzing thanked everyone for joining the call on a holiday and that he will be chairing the meeting.

II. Review of January 11, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Benzing asked if there were any problems, suggestions, or changes to the minutes and asked if there were any objections. There were no objections, minutes were accepted.

III. Updated 2021 Legislative Priorities

Charlotte Davis informed participants that the priorities were updated on the basis from the conversation from the last meeting. Mr. Benzing shared the handout on his screen to review with participants. Ms. Davis reviewed the following changes, 1) number change for MARBIDCO to \$2.735 million from \$2.875 million; 2) Added broadband to infrastructure and beefed up the paragraph; 3) expanded language to rural economic development. Ms. Davis informed participants that the plan is for the committee to adopt it so the priorities can be approved before the January 29th Board Meeting. Mr. Sherwin Wells asked a question regarding the need to change the MARBIDCO amount. Mr. McHenry stated that legislation was passed last year to set up the certified local farm enterprise program as part that, MARBIDCO agreed to extend its funding for an additional a year and use some of the savings to fund a new farm aggregation program as well as to free up state funds in the amount of \$140,000 to fund the new two person office at MDA. While the legislation was vetoed creating the program last year and it was overridden last week by the Senate. MDA will be creating the new office and the \$140,000 savings will continue in the budget, which is related to the legislation that was passed last year and the BURFA. Mr. Benzing asked for a motion to accept the Legislative Priorities, Delegate McKay made the motion to adopt the Legislative Priorities, Senator Eckhardt seconded. Mr. Benzing asked if there was any further discussion, anyone opposed, anyone voting present. There were no comments. The motion passed for the Legislative Committee to approve the Legislative Priorities.

IV. Bill Tracking

- SB0102 and SB0092: Mr. Benzing reviewed a list of bills that needed letters of support for the coming week as they need to be submitted two days in advance of the hearing by 3pm. Senate Bill 0102- *Income Tax - Credits for Preceptors in Areas with Health Care Workforce Shortages*, is due today, 1/18 and SB0092- *Income Tax - Credits for Preceptors in Areas with Health Care Workforce Shortages* is due on 1/19. Mr. Benzing asked Ms. Davis if RMC was in a position to get the testimony out today and she informed participants that testimony was included in the meeting packet for the bills. Senator Eckhardt explained that one bill was for the nurse practitioners and that changes the number of hours and removes the sunset. The second bill adds physician assistants to the mix with doctors and mps, who will be responsible for creating their own funding source as it's a special tax credit so it doesn't put a drain on the general fund. The Profession is funding to offset tax credits for the preceptors of the clinicians who are entering the workforce. Mr. Benzing asked for motions of support to approve testimony be sent to respective committees for SB0102 and SB0092. Delegate McKay made the motion, Mr. Hartline seconded. Mr. Benzing asked if there was any further discussion, anyone opposed, anyone voting present. There were no comments. Motion passed to approve SB0102 and SB0092.
- SB153/HB376- Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard – Municipal Electric Utilities
Mr. Benzing stated that SB153/HB376 was listed 'to monitor' on the Legislative Committee tracking sheet. Ms. Davis stated that she received a request from Easton Utilities to consider the bill and support it. Ms. Davis referred to the talking points that were included in the meeting materials. Mr. Benzing stated that all the savings would go to the consumer. Mr. Benzing asked if there was any discussion to change the Committee's decision to monitor the bill to support. There was no discussion to submit a letter of support for SB153/HB0376. Mr. Benzing asked to get a motion, Lindsay Thompson made the motion, Alice Settle-Raskin seconded. Mr. Benzing asked if there was any further discussion, anyone opposed, anyone voting present. There were no comments. The motion passed to approve submitting testimony for SB0135/HB0376.
- SB0246/HB0360 -Angel Investor Tax Credit Program
Ms. Davis informed participants that we supported the bill last year and asked for comments by Senator Eckhardt. The Senator stated that she was not sure it is going anywhere as it does require funding. Mr. Benzing stated that since we submitted testimony last year, we do not have to vote this year as it was decided in the last meeting that bills supported last year will be automatically supported this year. Mr. Wells asked about the purpose of the Angel Investor Tax Credit Program. Ms. Davis stated that it is to encourage an individual to invest in a certified local business/company. The idea is to encourage local investing and offer a tax credit to the investor. It is capped at a \$500,000 credit and there are qualifications of what kind of business can apply. The purpose is to get capital into new businesses in rural areas. Mr. Benzing asked if there was any objection in supporting the Angel Investor Tax Credit program this. There was none.
- SB0013-Certified Nursing Assistants – Certificate Renewal – Training Program Requirements. Mr. Senator Eckhardt stated that this bill will make it easier for Certified Nursing Assistants to renew their license if they let it lapse by reducing the number of clinical hours required and that the State Board of Nursing will develop the programs. Mr. Benzing stated that this bill supports the Governor's efforts to increase the number of health care workers in the field. Mr. Benzing asked for a motion to submit testimony in support of SB0013. Wilbur Levengood moved the motion

and Senator Eckhardt seconded. Mr. Benzing asked if there was any further discussion, anyone opposed, anyone voting present. There were no comments. The motion passed to submit testimony for SB0013.

- SB0011-Sales and Use Tax – Agricultural Purpose Exemption – Seedlings and Fruit Trees
Ms. Davis stated that the bill expands the current sales use exemption to see seedlings and fruit trees. Ms. Thompson stated that agricultural inputs are largely exempt from taxes and this bill add these two inputs to the list and she thinks we should be supported. Ms. Thompson moved the motion to support the bill, Steve McHenry seconded it. Mr. Benzing asked if there was any discussion. Mr. Hartline stated that the productions of seedlings and fruit trees are both extensive farming types for Prince George’s and Charles Counties. Mr. Wells made a comment on taxes for rabbit feed and Ms. Thompson stated that the Agriculture Committee should discuss other inputs that might be eligible for this tax exemption. Mr. Benzing asked if there was any further discussion, anyone opposed, anyone voting present. There were no comments. The motion passed to submit testimony for SB0011.
- SB0056-Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Psychiatrist and Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Telemedicine Reimbursement – Sunset Termination
Mr. Benzing asked Senator Eckhardt if this bill was similar to the telehealth bill and she replied yes and informed participants that we are already doing it but just want to remove the sunset. Mr. Benzing stated we already supported it originally because of its impact in rural Maryland and even more so now we need practioners to be able to get paid for their work. Mr. Benzing asked if there was any discussion to submit testimony for SB0056 and there was none. He asked for a motion, Alice Settle-Raskin moved the motion and Wilber Levensgood seconded. Mr. Benzing asked if there was any further discussion, anyone opposed, anyone voting present. There were no comments. The motion passed to submit testimony for SB0056.

Mr. Benzing stated there were no other bills to discuss until the next meeting as the next bills will be heard on January 27th. Ms. Davis informed participants that there will be a stakeholder’s meeting to discuss HB0097/SB0066 and HB0043. Mr. Benzing stated that he was on a Community Development Network call that day and that there was concern that the proposed broadband bills would impact the progress already made in rural broadband and he informed them that RMC would add amendment language that would not impact this progress. Mr. Benzing stated that the testimony was due this Friday, 1/22 and Scott Warner suggested that the Executive Committee could take the action by Friday to approve the testimony with amendment. The Legislative Committee agreed to let the Council’s Executive Committee approve testimony for the broadband bills.

V. Adjourn

Mr. Benzing asked for a motion to adjourn. Delegate McKay made the motion and Mr. Levensgood seconded. The motion passed to adjourn the meeting at 2:45pm.

Next Meeting: Monday, January 25, 2021, 2pm-3pm, Zoom Teleconference