



RMC Legislative Committee Meeting
Monday, January 26, 2026
2:00 pm to 3:00 pm
Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Participants: Co-Chair Kurt Fuchs, Beth Hill, William Reid, Daisy Lukose, Bill Valentine, Alice Settle-Raskin, Bib Zimmeroff, Nancy LaJoice, Cassie Shirk, Grayson Middleton, Stacy Kubofcik, Rachel Jones, Steve McHenry, Alyssa Hastings, Josh Hastings, Scott Warner, Susan O’Neill, Janice Palmer, Megan Speake, Heather Tinelli, Matthew Tefteau, Melanie Pursel, Cassandra Vanhooser, Susanne Richards

RMC Staff: Charlotte Davis, Megan D’Arcy, Leeza DeCheubel

The meeting was called to order at 2:03 PM by Co-Chair Kurt Fuchs, who welcomed participants and led introductions.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the January 12, 2026, meeting. Bill Valentine motioned to approve the minutes; Dr. William Reid seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Staff provided an update on the FY2027 budget, noting that the Rural Maryland Council budget will remain level-funded.

The committee then turned to legislative matters. Staff reviewed SB0300/HB0461, Economic Development – Rural Readiness Program and Rural Maryland Capacity Building Fund – Establishment, which will be first heard in the Senate on February 5, 2026.

The following bills were reviewed with a recommendation of **Support**:

1. **SB0257** – *Mel Noland Woodland Incentives and Fellowship Fund – Reporting*
 - o Motion to Support: Bill Valentine, Steve McHenry
2. **SB0288** – *Transportation – Highway User Revenues Capital Grants – Calculation*
 - o Motion to Support: Bill Valentine, Alice Settle-Raskin
3. **HB0272** – *Food Establishments – Lavatory Requirement and On-Farm Food Service Facility License*
 - o Motion to Support: Alice Settle-Raskin, Steve McHenry
4. **HB0460** – *Solar Energy – Construction of Generating Stations in Priority Preservation Areas and Study*
 - o Recommendation: Support with Amendment
 - o Motion to Support with Amendment: Steve McHenry, Bill Valentine
5. **HB0390/SB0282** – *Budget Bill (Fiscal Year 2027)*
 - o Motion to Support: Steve McHenry, Susan O’Neill



The following bills were reviewed with a recommendation to **Monitor**:

1. **HB0391/SB0283** – *Creation of a State Debt – Maryland Consolidated Capital Bond Loan (Multiple Fiscal Years)*
2. **HB0392/SB0284** – *Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2026*
3. **SB0341/HB0345** – *Public Utilities – Solar Energy Generating Systems and Solar Renewable Energy Credits (Affordable Solar Act)*
4. **SB0344/HB0112** – *Property Tax – Agricultural Use Assessment – Community Solar Energy Generating Systems*
5. **HB0447** – *Natural Resources – Right to Hunt, Fish, and Harvest Wildlife*
6. **HB0235/SB0047** – *Housing and Community Development – Neighborhood Business Development Program – Local Approval Requirement*
7. **HB0240** – *Local Comprehensive Plans – Guidance Materials and Notification to the Department of Planning*
8. **HB0245/SB0223** – *Maryland Energy Administration – Jane E. Lawton Conservation Loan Program and Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund*
9. **HB0255/SB0164** – *Natural Resources – Pamela J. Kelly Tree-Mendous Maryland Program – Alterations*
10. **SB0311** – *Education – The Blueprint for Maryland's Future – Revisions*
11. **SB0325** – *Land Use – Permitting – Development Rights (Maryland Housing Certainty Act)*
12. **SB0267** – *Land Use – Residential Housing – Oversight, Regulation, and Taxation (Building Affordably in My Back Yard Act)*
13. **HB0437/SB0059** – *Transportation – Major Highway Capacity Expansion Projects and Impact Assessments (Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2026)*

The following bills were discussed as **Questionable**:

1. **HB0342** – *Forestry Licenses – Applicant Qualifications – Alterations*
 - Note: Will revisit
2. **HB0382** – *Commercial Law – Broadband Access – Low-Income Consumer Programs (Maryland Broadband Opportunity and Fairness Act)*
 - Note: Monitor
 - Motion to Monitor: Steve McHenry, Bill Valentine
3. **HB0429** – *On-Farm Organics and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Programs – Established*

Upcoming events were reviewed, including the Legislative Luncheon on January 27, Rural Maryland Day on February 12, Maryland Day on March 25, and the Spring Executive Board Meeting scheduled for April 3.

The next meeting of the committee was scheduled for February 9, 2026.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:57 pm.