

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

House Bill 1473  
Economic Matters

(Delegate Hill, *et al.*)

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Workgroup on Establishing a Science and Technology Best Practices and  
Innovation Network

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This bill establishes the Workgroup on Establishing a Science and Technology Best Practices and Innovation Network, staffed by the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). The workgroup must study and make recommendations on topics related to the establishment of a network of experts in science, technology, and industry. A member of the workgroup may not receive compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses. By December 1, 2020, the workgroup must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2020, and terminates June 30, 2021.**

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** UMBC can staff the workgroup with existing budgeted resources, as discussed further below. Expense reimbursements for workgroup members are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The workgroup must:

- identify and analyze options for establishing and maintaining a network of experts in science, technology, and industry to (1) facilitate voluntary collaboration;

(2) facilitate the open exchange of state-of-the-art and evidence-based data and information; (3) inform State policy and practices; and (4) promote solution development and decision making based on sound science, innovation, and best practices;

- identify and evaluate methods for (1) establishing a digital or virtual referral network of experts in science, technology, and industry; (2) registering expert participants; and (3) making network expertise available to the public;
- examine the costs of developing and maintaining a network of experts in science, technology, and industry; and
- make recommendations regarding the establishment of a science and technology best practices and innovation network.

**Current Law/Background:** In 2011, the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education, a nonprofit coalition of State employers, established an online platform known as STEMnet in partnership with entities in the federal, State, and local government. STEMnet is self-described as Maryland’s STEM Innovation Network and “is an online platform that offers cutting-edge resources, tools, programs, and workforce connections to strengthen STEM teaching and learning.” STEMnet provides educators and students access to various resources, such as STEM professionals, instruction, and STEM career information. More information can be found on STEMnet’s [website](#).

**State Expenditures:** UMBC advises that the workgroup requires a significant amount of staff time and that the university plans to hire a full-time staff and also redirect existing staff. The Department of Legislative Services agrees with UMBC’s assessment as it relates to staff time, but disagrees with the need to hire a full-time staff for a workgroup of limited scope and duration; therefore, this analysis does not include any additional staffing costs.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** University System of Maryland; Department of Commerce; Maryland Higher Education Commission; Maryland Department of Agriculture; Maryland Department of the Environment; Maryland Department of Health; Maryland Department of Transportation; STEMnet; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 10, 2020  
an/rhh

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