

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 456 (Senator Beidle, *et al.*)
 Finance and Budget and Taxation

Transportation - Third Chesapeake Bay Crossing - Study

This bill requires the Maryland Transit Institute (MTI) at the University of Maryland to conduct a study on the addition of a third Chesapeake Bay crossing. The Governor must include an appropriation of \$5.0 million for the completion of the study in the annual budget bill for fiscal 2022. By December 1, 2022, MTI must submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor, the General Assembly, members of the Anne Arundel and Queen Anne’s county delegations to the General Assembly, and specified representatives of the Anne Arundel and Queen Anne’s county governments. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2020, and terminates June 30, 2023.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$5.0 million in FY 2022. The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) can provide information to MTI as necessary using existing resources, as discussed below. Revenues are not affected. **This bill establishes a mandated appropriation for FY 2022.**

(\$ in millions)	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF/SF Exp.	0	5.0	0	0	0
Net Effect	\$0.0	(\$5.0)	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease

Local Effect: The bill does not directly affect local governmental operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: In conducting the study, MTI must:

- study short-term and long-term solutions for traffic on, around, and caused by the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and develop recommendations for implementing those solutions;
- study the potential health and environmental impacts of adding a third Chesapeake Bay crossing;
- provide opportunities for public input and comments from communities surrounding the Chesapeake Bay Bridge; and
- develop recommendations for addressing potential health and environmental impacts of constructing and operating a third Chesapeake Bay crossing.

MDOT must provide MTI with any information necessary to complete the study.

Current Law/Background:

Chesapeake Bay Bridge

The Chesapeake Bay Bridge is the only toll bridge in Maryland that currently crosses the Chesapeake Bay. The bridge connects Maryland's Eastern Shore recreational regions with the metropolitan areas of Annapolis, Baltimore, and the District of Columbia. The original two-lane bridge was constructed in 1952, and the second three-lane bridge was constructed in 1973. The Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) estimates that about 25.6 million vehicles crossed the bridge in fiscal 2014. Traffic congestion on the bridge can be severe.

The 2015 [Bay Bridge Life Cycle Cost Analysis](#) estimates that, by 2040, average traffic on the bridge will increase by at least 31.3% (to 92,800 vehicles per day). Furthermore, on summer Fridays (one of the heaviest traffic days for the bridge), traffic volume is estimated to increase by at least 36.6% by 2040 (to 94,300 vehicles).

The analysis also researched and developed alternatives designed to improve the Bay Bridge and its approaching roadways. The analysis includes a cost estimate of \$3.25 billion to simply repair and maintain the bridge in its existing form through 2065, as well as a range of alternatives that involve building a third bridge across the bay, demolishing one or both existing bridges to rebuild with additional travel lanes, and

widening the U.S. 50/301 main line by one lane. Costs for the alternatives are estimated through 2060 and range from \$7.80 billion (which simply widens and rehabilitates the existing eastbound bridge to three lanes) to \$25.34 billion (which demolishes both existing structures to rebuild a new, single, eight-lane bridge).

Third Crossing of the Chesapeake Bay – National Environmental Policy Act Process

MDTA is currently undertaking a Tier 1 National Environmental Policy Act study for a third crossing of the Chesapeake Bay. One of the issues being explored is the best location for such a bridge. A draft of the study is scheduled to be complete during summer 2020, while the full study is scheduled to be complete during summer 2021. Updates on the progress and findings of the study can be found on [MDTA's website](#).

Maryland Transportation Institute

MTI exists within the University of Maryland and performs research on various transportation issues, including traffic operations and control, freight and logistics, and connected and automated transportation. MTI acts as a coordinator for University of Maryland centers and faculty researching and studying transportation issues. More information on MTI's activities can be found on its [website](#).

State Expenditures: Pursuant to the bill's mandated appropriation, general fund expenditures increase by \$5 million in fiscal 2022 for MTI to complete the required study. Although MTI has 17 months to complete the required study under the bill, it is assumed that all spending by MTI occurs in fiscal 2022, consistent with the mandated appropriation.

Assuming MDOT is only required to compile and provide information to MTI that already exists, MDOT can do so with existing budgeted resources. If, however, MDOT is required to collect new data or perform additional analyses for MTI, Transportation Trust Fund expenditures may increase.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): University System of Maryland; Department of Budget and Management; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

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