

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2013 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 844 (Senator Getty)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Public Information Act - Electronic Mail Addresses - Web Site Notice

This bill requires a “governmental unit” (defined as a unit or an instrumentality of the State, a county, or a municipal corporation) that has a website and uses electronic mail to post, in a conspicuous location on the website, the following statement: “Under Maryland law, email addresses are public records. If you do not want your email address released in response to a public information request, do not send email to this entity. Instead, contact this entity by phone or in writing.”

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill’s requirements can be handled with existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: The bill’s requirements can be handled with existing budgeted resources.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Generally, a custodian of a public record must permit inspection of the record at a reasonable time.

A custodian has to deny inspection of a public record or any part of a public record if (1) the public record is privileged or confidential by law or (2) the inspection would be contrary to a State statute, a federal statute or regulation, the Maryland Rules, or an order of a court of record. Denial of inspection is also mandatory for public records relating to adoption, welfare records, letters of reference, specified information about an individual maintained by a library, retirement records, certain police records, criminal charging

documents, arrest warrants, personnel records, certain hospital and school records, records of certain State agencies, and certain recorded and surveillance images. Denial of inspection is required for information in a public record relating to certain medical, psychological, sociological, and financial information; trade secrets; certain personal information about public employees; information about the security of an information system; and licensing records.

Unless otherwise specified, if a custodian believes that inspection of a part of a public record by an applicant would be contrary to the public interest, the custodian may deny inspection to the applicant of that part of the record. Other permissible denials include information relating to documents that would not be available through discovery in a lawsuit, certain information about publicly administered tests, research projects conducted by an institution of the State or a political subdivision, real estate appraisals of property to be acquired by the State prior to its acquisition, certain information on inventions owned by State public higher educational institutions, and trade secrets or confidential information owned by the Maryland Technology Development Corporation.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Office of the Attorney General, Maryland State Department of Education, Department of General Services, Comptroller's Office, Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Maryland Association of Counties, Maryland Municipal League, Maryland Department of Transportation, Maryland Transportation Authority, Department of Legislative Services

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