

**Department of Legislative Services**  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2017 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

Senate Bill 850  
 Finance

(Senator Mathias)

**Chesapeake Bay Water Transportation Network**

This bill requires the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) to study and examine the feasibility and practicality of using the Chesapeake Bay and its navigable waters as a water transportation network to link waterfront communities along the bay by using high-speed water taxis and other vessels to transport residents and visitors to employment centers, recreational facilities, and activities along the bay. MDOT and MTA must prepare an inventory of facilities that might be used for such a network and estimate the cost of implementing the network. MDOT and MTA must report their findings to the Governor and the General Assembly by June 30, 2019.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2017, and terminates June 30, 2019.

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) expenditures increase by approximately \$200,000 in FY 2018 only for MDOT to enlist the services of a consultant to perform the required study. These costs may be less to the extent that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is able to assist MDOT with the study. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SF Expenditure	200,000	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$200,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

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

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

## Analysis

**Current Law/Background:** MDOT is charged with managing the State's transportation systems. To that end, MDOT is organized into modal units that focus on different aspects of transportation in the State. For example, MTA is responsible for construction, operation, and maintenance of the Baltimore metropolitan area transit system as well as for commuter services in suburban areas of the State, while the Maryland Port Administration develops, markets, and maintains the State's ports and waterways.

The Chesapeake Bay is a 200-mile-long estuary (a body of water where fresh and salt water mix); it is the largest estuary in the United States. The Chesapeake Bay Program estimates that there are 150 streams, creeks, and rivers that drain into the bay watershed and that there are more than 700 public access points along the bay and its tributaries.

**State Expenditures:** MDOT does not have the expertise needed to perform the study required by the bill and requires the assistance of one of its consultants. Therefore, TTF expenditures increase by \$200,000 in fiscal 2018 only to perform the required study.

Even though it is not required by the bill, DNR advises that because it is the State agency generally tasked with developing plans for waterway improvement, maintaining inventories of water access sites, funding marine facilities beneficial to the boating public, and marking and maintaining channels, it could assist MDOT with the required study in an advisory role. To the extent that DNR is able to assist MDOT with the study, TTF expenditures may be reduced.

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## Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** HB 1439 of 2016 received a hearing in the House Environment and Transportation Committee, but no further action was taken.

**Cross File:** HB 907 (Delegate Lisanti, *et al.*) - Environment and Transportation.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Natural Resources; Chesapeake Bay Program; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 1, 2017  
md/mcr

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