

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

Senate Bill 707

(Senator Carter)

Finance

Ways and Means

Task Force on the Tourism Industry in Maryland

This bill establishes the Task Force on the Tourism Industry in Maryland, staffed by the Office of Tourism Development in the Department of Commerce (Commerce). The task force must review and assess specified aspects of the tourism industry in the State and make recommendations regarding additional funding, training, and other resources needed to increase diversity and inclusion in the tourism industry. By January 1, 2022, the task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2020, and terminates June 30, 2022.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for Commerce are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources. To the extent that Commerce hires a firm to conduct survey research related to diversity and inclusion – as the department advises it intends to do – general funds increase in FY 2021 and/or 2022 by an estimated \$100,000 in total. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The task force must:

- review the existing funding, training, and other resources available to support participants in the tourism industry in the State;

- study the different challenges and needs of small, medium, and large participants in the tourism industry in urban, suburban, and rural areas of the State;
- assess the need for additional funding, training, and other resources to support small and minority entities participating in or trying to enter into the tourism industry in the State;
- seek input and information from small and minority entities that are participating in or trying to enter into the tourism industry; and
- make recommendations regarding additional funding, training, and other resources needed to increase diversity and inclusion in the tourism industry.

Current Law/Background: The Office of Tourism Development serves as the State’s official travel marketing agency, promoting Maryland attractions, accommodations, and services. More specifically, the activities of the office include (1) advertising and communications; (2) generating consumer interest in Maryland as a travel destination; (3) providing technical assistance; and (4) ensuring the marketability and consumer readiness of Maryland tourism products. The office has nearly 40 employees.

The office is distinct from the Maryland Tourism Development Board, the duties of which include, among others (1) spending State funds to plan, advertise, promote, assist, and develop the tourism and travel industries in the State and (2) providing grants to destination marketing organizations for the purpose of attracting visitors to the State.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: SB 628 of 2019, a similar bill as amended, passed the Senate and received a hearing from the House Ways and Means Committee, but no further action was taken.

Designated Cross File: HB 1541 (Delegate Brooks) - Ways and Means.

Information Source(s): Department of Commerce; Department of Legislative Services

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