

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 323

(Delegate Guyton, *et al.*)

Environment and Transportation and  
Economic Matters

Education, Energy, and the Environment

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**Environment - Commission on Climate Change Membership - Addition**

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This bill adds the Chair of the Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Secretary of Emergency Management, or their designees, to the Maryland Commission on Climate Change (MCCC).

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Any expense reimbursements for additional MCCC members are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:**

*Maryland Commission on Climate Change*

MCCC, originally created by executive order, was codified in statute pursuant to Chapter 429 of 2015 to advise the Governor and the General Assembly on ways to mitigate the causes of, prepare for, and adapt to the consequences of climate change. MCCC is required to submit annual updates to the Governor and the General Assembly on the State's efforts to mitigate the causes of, prepare for, and adapt to the consequences of climate change, including any future plans and recommendations for legislation. The Maryland

Department of the Environment and the Department of Natural Resources jointly staff the commission.

In addition to other designated and appointed members, MCCC includes the secretaries of the Environment, Agriculture, Natural Resources, Planning, Transportation, and General Services, plus the Director of the Maryland Energy Administration and the People's Counsel (or their designees).

#### *Public Service Commission*

PSC must supervise and regulate public service companies subject to its jurisdiction to (1) ensure their operation in the interest of the public and (2) promote adequate, economical, and efficient delivery of utility services in the State without unjust discrimination. In doing so, PSC must consider the public safety, the economy of the State, the maintenance of fair and stable labor standards for affected workers, the conservation of natural resources, the preservation of environmental quality, the achievement of the State's climate commitments for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and the protection of a public service company's infrastructure against cybersecurity threats. PSC must also enforce compliance with legal requirements by public service companies.

“Public service company” means a common carrier company, electric company, gas company, sewage disposal company, telegraph company, telephone company, water company, or any combination of public service companies.

#### *Maryland Department of Emergency Management*

Chapters 287 and 288 of 2021 established the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) as a principal department of the Executive Branch of State government and as the successor to the Maryland Emergency Management Agency. MDEM is responsible for coordinating the State response in any major emergency or disaster. This includes supporting local governments as needed or requested and coordinating assistance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other federal partners. MDEM manages many of the federal grants that fund a broad range of initiatives leading to enhanced protection from and responses to the full range of natural and man-made disasters that could threaten the State's citizens.

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### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

**Designated Cross File:** SB 337 (Senator Feldman, *et al.*) - Education, Energy, and the Environment.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Department of the Environment; Public Service Commission; Maryland Department of Emergency Management; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 30, 2024  
km/lgc Third Reader - March 13, 2024  
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