



## THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

### **Public Service Commission – Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity – Rapid Health Impact Assessment Requirement – HB109**

#### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **How does the Public Service Commission (PSC) impact health?**

The Public Service Commission (PSC) regulates public utility and transportation services in Maryland. The PSC issues Certificates for Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCNs) to authorize construction on electricity generating stations or high-voltage transmission lines.

The CPCN process already requires the PSC to consider the effect of applications on historic sites, aviation safety, air and water quality, and aesthetics. However, the CPCN process does not currently consider potential impacts on health.

#### **What does this bill do?**

HB 109 requires applicants for CPCNs to conduct a rapid Health Impact Assessment (HIA) on the project and report on its findings. The bill also requires the PSC to consider the HIA findings before taking final action on the CPCN.

Rapid HIAs can:

- Reduce health risks to communities where projects are located
- Highlight health benefits
- Strengthen community buy-in
- Reduce liability

HB 109 is supported by health professionals, academic institutions, and environmental advocates.

#### **What is a rapid Health Impact Assessment (HIA)?**

A rapid HIA is a quick, low-cost study of how a project or policy could impact human health. The HIA reviews existing evidence, collects input from stakeholders, and suggests how project implementation might decrease potential harms – or increase potential benefits – to the health of Maryland residents. A rapid HIA can be typically be completed within 30 days; HB 109 allows up to 45 days.

#### **Who can conduct the required Rapid HIA? How much will it cost?**

Many public health professionals have training in HIA methods, and HIAs are already common practice in some sectors. Publicly available guidelines and minimum elements for each step of the HIA process exist, and can be easily followed. A CPCN applicant can contract with a person with relevant expertise, or conduct the HIA themselves in accordance with relevant guidance.

According to the Department of Legislative Services, the involved State agencies can review rapid HIAs with existing budgeted resources. The bill will not materially affect State or local government finances.