



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary

January 21, 2021

The Honorable Paul Pinsky
Chair, Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Cheryl C. Kagan
Vice Chair, Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

***Re: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 324 – Environment and Natural Resources
– Complaints, Inspections, and Enforcement – Information Maintenance and
Reporting***

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources is providing the following information on Senate Bill 324. This bill would require the department to provide an annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly that includes certain statistics relative to DNR's efforts to enforce natural resources and conservation laws. The bill also requires that the department provide information on convictions that result from those enforcement efforts.

The enforcement statistics required by this bill are consistent with those currently provided in the agency's Managing For Results report and can be easily provided using current systems managed by or available to DNR. Information regarding convictions, however, is problematic. Unlike traffic and criminal records, there currently exists no reporting system that delivers information directly from the District Court to the department in order to track convictions of persons who violate natural resources and conservation laws. To obtain this information, the department must manually research each individual citation using publicly available Case Search software. This is a labor intensive process and is currently only done as needed for certified records or investigations. Doing the work necessary to complete this portion of the bill's report would be costly to the department and may take valuable resources away from enforcement duties.

The department has been working diligently to produce better reporting of convictions data. In order to track the adjudication of natural resources and conservation violations, an interface must be created within the State's existing Delta+ reporting system for issuing natural resources violations. The integration would require the Judiciary Information System (JIS) -- owned and managed by the Judiciary -- to provide the adjudication data from the Judiciary database to the Maryland State Police (MSP), with whom DNR shares the Delta+ platform. DNR has been waiting for two years for the Judiciary's JIS to finish implementation of the new Maryland Electronic Courts (MDEC) case management system in order to complete the Natural Resources

Delta+ Violation Project. As of January 2021, the Judiciary does not have a timeline to complete the Natural Resources Delta+ Project. MSP roughly estimates \$200,000 and twelve months of development for their portion of the work on this project. There is no cost estimate from the Judiciary at this time for the remainder of the project. Considering that completion of the MDEC project is the Judiciary's highest priority and is already behind schedule, it is doubtful that implementation of the Natural Resources Project will be completed within the next 18 months.

Thank you for allowing the department to submit this information on SB 324 for the committee's careful consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

James W. McKitrick
Director, Legislative and Constituent Services

CC: The Honorable Sarah Elfreth
The Honorable Jack Bailey