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Senate Bill 35 – Open Meetings Act - State Ethics Commission (Maryland State Agency Transparency Act of 2023)

Testimony Before the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

The State Ethics Commission (“Commission”) offers informational testimony on Senate Bill 35 – Open Meetings Act - State Ethics Commission (Maryland State Agency Transparency Act of 2023). The bill adds the State Ethics Commission to a list of defined public bodies that must meet certain transparency requirements in the Open Meetings Act. The Commission is pleased to report that our office already complies with a large majority of the transparency measures included in this bill.

To make certain that our office can successfully execute all the requirements of this bill, we have been working with the House Sponsor on an amendment to include the State Ethics Commission in the listed State entities which require the Maryland Department of Information Technology (“DoIT”) to provide support for the live streaming and archiving requirements in Section 3-307(h) of the Open Meetings Act. Our fiscal note on this bill highlighted the fiscal impacts on the Commission without such support. The State Ethics Commission has a small staff, without designated IT personnel or expertise in this area. Our office currently relies on DoIT for IT services and assistance. The requested amendment would ensure DoIT's continued assistance with these new requirements and Commission is thankful for the work of the sponsors on this bill and the amendment.