

Department of Legislative Services  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
 First Reader

Senate Bill 630 (Senator Carter)  
 Budget and Taxation

Transportation - Regional Transportation Authority Study

This bill authorizes the General Assembly to contract with a transportation consultant, institution, agency, or private contractor, or any other qualified person, to conduct a study of regional transportation authorities. The entity contracted to conduct the study must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by October 31, 2019. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2019, and terminates June 30, 2020.**

Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** *Under one set of assumptions,* general fund expenditures increase by \$80,000 in FY 2019 and by \$320,000 in FY 2020 for the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) to contract with one of the Maryland Department of Transportation’s (MDOT’s) consultants to complete the study.

(in dollars)	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	80,000	320,000	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$80,000)	(\$320,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0

*Note: ( ) = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease*

**Local Effect:** The bill does not directly affect local governmental operations or finances.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The study authorized under the bill must:

- define regional transportation authority;
- study regional transportation authorities in operation throughout the United States;
- review the range of powers granted to regional transportation authorities by legislatures, as specified;
- review transit-oriented development strategies adopted by regional transportation authorities;
- determine the geographical boundaries of a potential regional transportation authority that would operate in Maryland and surrounding states;
- analyze existing transportation agreements between states, cities, and counties within the boundaries of the potential regional transportation authority;
- analyze the existing transportation agreements between operators of transportation services in the geographical boundaries of the potential regional transportation authority to determine which services would be within the jurisdiction of the potential regional transportation authority;
- explore the options for financing transportation systems within the boundaries of the potential regional transportation authority, as specified;
- explore the options for governing the potential regional transportation authority by analyzing the governance models of other regional transportation authorities; and
- develop recommendation on the feasibility of creating, financing, and operating a regional transportation authority in the State and surrounding areas.

The entity that is contracted with to conduct the study must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly by October 31, 2019.

**Current Law/Background:** The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) operates a comprehensive transit system throughout the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area, including more than 50 local bus lines in Baltimore and other services such as the light rail, Baltimore Metro subway, commuter buses, Maryland Area Regional Commuter (also known as MARC) trains, and mobility/paratransit vehicles. MTA is also responsible for hundreds of transit stations.

Since 1971, the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) has been responsible for constructing, managing, operating, and improving the State's toll facilities and for financing new revenue producing transportation projects. MDTA has the authority to set tolls on transportation facilities projects under its supervision. MDTA's transportation facilities projects primarily include bridges, tunnels, and toll highways, such as the

Chesapeake Bay Bridge, the Baltimore Harbor Tunnel, the Intercounty Connector, and the John F. Kennedy Memorial Highway.

The State provides annual grant funding (along with the Commonwealth of Virginia and District of Columbia) for the operations and capital expenses of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and its transit services. WMATA operates the Metrorail, Metrobus, and MetroAccess systems to provide public transit services in and around the District of Columbia metropolitan area. Specifically, WMATA maintains and operates 11,500 bus stops for its 1,500 buses, as well as 91 transit stations for its six color-coded rail lines.

**State Expenditures:** Although the bill only authorizes, and does not require, the General Assembly to contract with an entity to conduct a study of regional transportation authorities, for the purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that the authority granted by the bill is used, and that DLS contracts with the entity on behalf of the General Assembly.

Therefore, general fund expenditures by DLS increase by \$80,000 in fiscal 2019 (which reflects the bill's June 1, 2019 effective date) and by \$320,000 in fiscal 2020 to contract with one of MDOT's transportation consultants to complete the study. The estimate is based on information provided by MDOT; MDOT advises that such a study likely costs between \$300,000 and \$500,000 depending on the consultant selected.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** HB 771 (Delegate Bridges, *et al.*) - Environment and Transportation.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Department of Transportation; University System of Maryland; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 22, 2019  
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