

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 452

(Delegate Guyton, *et al.*)

Environment and Transportation

Education, Energy, and the Environment

Outdoor Lighting - Guidance and Use of State Funds

This bill alters an existing prohibition against State funds being used to install or replace a permanent outdoor luminaire that does not meet specified criteria on the grounds of a State building or facility by (1) including State parks and trails in the prohibition and (2) exempting lighting used to illuminate the field of play at a sports facility. It also specifies that, except for a luminaire installed or replaced by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), a luminaire installed or replaced using State funds must have a correlated light temperature that is less than or equal to 3,000 Kelvin, subject to existing waiver procedures. Finally, the bill requires (1) the Maryland Green Building Council (MGBC) to update or develop related guidance, as specified, and (2) MDOT to conduct a review of its highway lighting practices, as specified. The bill applies only prospectively and does not affect the purchase of any outdoor lighting fixtures for a project for which the design phase has been completed before the effective date of any published guidance required by the bill.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not expected to materially affect State expenditures for outdoor lighting, given waiver procedures in current law and its prospective application. MDOT can conduct the review of highway lighting practices with existing budgeted resources. No effect on revenues.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The guidance updated or developed by MGBC must consider recommendations regarding light pollution and color temperature published by the American Medical Association. MDOT is not subject to any guidelines updated or developed by MGBC.

By September 30, 2026, MDOT must review highway lighting practices and, where applicable, consider alterations to current State practices that are inconsistent with guidelines established in the most recent edition of the Federal Highway Administration's Lighting Handbook.

Current Law: A "luminaire" is the complete lighting unit including the lamp, other components that produce light, and the assembly that holds the lamp. A "restricted uplight luminaire" is a lighting fixture that (1) allows no direct light emission above a horizontal plane through the fixture's lowest light-emitting part, except for a 0.5% maximum incidental uplight from reflection off mounting hardware and (2) emits no more than 10% of the total direct light emission at or above a vertical angle of 80 degrees.

State funds may not be used to install or replace a permanent outdoor luminaire on the grounds of any State building or facility unless:

- the luminaire is designed to maximize energy conservation and minimize light pollution, glare, and light trespass;
- the illumination produced by the luminaire is the minimum necessary for the intended purpose of the lighting; and
- the luminaire is a restricted uplight luminaire if it has an output of more than 1,800 lumens.

The prohibition does not apply to luminaires that are:

- located on the grounds of a correctional facility;
- required by federal regulation;
- required for storm operation activities performed by MDOT;
- required to illuminate the Maryland or United States flag;
- used for sign illumination; or
- in a lighting plan where fewer than 25% of the luminaires are to be replaced.

The Board of Public Works (BPW) or the board's designee may waive the requirement that high-output luminaires be restricted uplight luminaires if the waiver is necessary for the lighting application. BPW must establish requirements for a waiver request, as specified.

In reviewing a waiver request, BPW or its designee must consider design safety, costs, and any other factors it deems appropriate. In regulations, BPW has delegated its waiver authority to the Department of General Services (DGS), MDOT, and the University System of Maryland.

Maryland Green Building Council

MGBC has 16 members, including 10 State agency heads and 6 members appointed by the Governor to represent environmental, business, and citizen interests. Among other responsibilities, MGBC must evaluate current high performance building technologies and provide recommendations concerning the most cost-effective green building technologies that the State might consider requiring in the construction of State facilities. The council is staffed by DGS and must report annually to the Governor and the General Assembly on recommendations for the implementation plan for a higher performance building program in the State and any progress made during the preceding year.

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of General Services; Department of Natural Resources; Board of Public Works; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 11, 2025
km/ljm Third Reader - March 21, 2025
Revised - Amendment(s) - March 21, 2025

Analysis by: Michael C. Rubenstein

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510