

SENATE BILL 816

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5lr3464
CF HB 651

By: **Senators Watson, Carozza, Muse, and Brooks**

Introduced and read first time: January 28, 2025

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Public Service Commission – Membership – Alterations**

3 FOR the purpose of increasing the number of commissioners appointed to the Public Service
4 Commission; establishing certain residency requirements for each commissioner;
5 altering the manner in which the Chair of the Commission is appointed; requiring
6 the Commission to submit, on or before a certain date, a slate of nominees to the
7 Governor for the initial appointment of certain commissioners; and generally
8 relating to the Public Service Commission.

9 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
10 Article – Public Utilities
11 Section 2–102 and 2–103
12 Annotated Code of Maryland
13 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

14 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
15 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

16 **Article – Public Utilities**

17 2–102.

18 (a) The Commission consists of [five] **SEVEN** commissioners, appointed by the
19 Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate.

20 (b) (1) Each commissioner shall be a registered voter of the State.

21 **(2) OF THE SEVEN COMMISSIONERS:**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(I) ONE COMMISSIONER SHALL BE A RESIDENT OF WESTERN MARYLAND, WHICH IS THE REGION THAT CONSISTS OF ALLEGANY COUNTY, CARROLL COUNTY, FREDERICK COUNTY, GARRETT COUNTY, AND WASHINGTON COUNTY;

(II) ONE COMMISSIONER SHALL BE A RESIDENT OF SOUTHERN MARYLAND, WHICH IS THE REGION THAT CONSISTS OF CALVERT COUNTY, CHARLES COUNTY, AND ST. MARY'S COUNTY;

(III) ONE COMMISSIONER SHALL BE A RESIDENT OF THE EASTERN SHORE, WHICH IS THE REGION THAT CONSISTS OF CAROLINE COUNTY, CECIL COUNTY, DORCHESTER COUNTY, KENT COUNTY, QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY, SOMERSET COUNTY, TALBOT COUNTY, WICOMICO COUNTY, AND WORCESTER COUNTY;

(IV) TWO COMMISSIONERS SHALL BE RESIDENTS OF CENTRAL MARYLAND, WHICH IS THE REGION THAT CONSISTS OF ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, BALTIMORE COUNTY, HARFORD COUNTY, HOWARD COUNTY, AND BALTIMORE CITY; AND

(V) TWO COMMISSIONERS SHALL BE RESIDENTS OF THE CAPITAL REGION, WHICH IS THE REGION THAT CONSISTS OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY AND PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY.

[(2)] (3) The Commission shall be:

(i) broadly representative of the geographic and demographic diversity of the State and of the public; and

(ii) composed of individuals with diverse training and experience.

(c) Each commissioner shall devote full time to the duties of office.

(d) (1) The term of a commissioner is 5 years and begins on July 1.

(2) The terms of commissioners are staggered as required by the terms in effect for commissioners on July 1, 2006.

(3) At the end of a term, a commissioner continues to serve until a successor qualifies.

(4) A commissioner who is appointed after a term has begun serves for the rest of the term and until a successor qualifies.

(e) Before taking office, each appointee to the Commission shall take the oath required by Article I, § 9 of the Maryland Constitution.

(f) The Governor may remove a commissioner for incompetence or misconduct in accordance with § 3–307 of the State Government Article.

2–103.

(a) With the advice and consent of the Senate, the Governor shall appoint a [Chairman] **CHAIR FROM AMONG THE COMMISSIONERS**.

(b) (1) The term of the [Chairman] **CHAIR** is 5 years and begins on July 1.

(2) At the end of a term, the [Chairman] **CHAIR** continues to serve until a successor qualifies.

(3) A [Chairman] **CHAIR** who is appointed after a term has begun serves for the rest of the term and until a successor qualifies.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, on or before August 1, 2025, the Public Service Commission shall submit a slate of nominees to the Governor for the initial appointment of the following two members added to the Public Service Commission as enacted under Section 1 of this Act:

(1) one member who is a resident of Western Maryland; and

(2) one member who is a resident of Southern Maryland.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall be construed to apply only prospectively and may not be applied or interpreted to have any effect on or application to the term of the Chair or any other member of the Public Service Commission serving before the effective date of this Act.

SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2025.