

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 376
 Finance

(Senator Watson)

Digital Asset and Blockchain Technology Task Force - Establishment

This bill establishes the Digital Asset and Blockchain Technology Task Force, staffed by the Office of Financial Regulation (OFR) in the Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor). The task force must conduct an analysis of – and make recommendations regarding – the expansion of blockchain technology and cryptocurrency in the State. Task force members may not receive compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses. By October 1, 2027, the task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026, and terminates June 30, 2028.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Special fund expenditures increase by \$49,400 in FY 2027 and \$53,500 in FY 2028 for contractual staffing costs. Any expense reimbursements for task force members are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources. No effect on revenues.

(in dollars)	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SF Expenditure	49,400	53,500	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$49,400)	(\$53,500)	\$0	\$0	\$0

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

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The task force’s analysis of the expansion of blockchain technology and cryptocurrency in the State must include:

- a discussion of the overall concepts of blockchain technology and cryptocurrency;
- an examination of the risks, including privacy risks, and the benefits of using blockchain technology and cryptocurrency in State and local government and private business in the State;
- an assessment of the impact of the cryptocurrency industry on the State, including its effect on State revenues and energy consumption; and
- any other related topic, as determined by the task force.

Current Law: The financial services industry in Maryland is regulated by OFR within MD Labor and the Securities Division of the Office of the Attorney General. Under the direction and authority of the Commissioner of Financial Regulation, OFR regulates State-chartered and State-licensed financial institutions operating in Maryland. These include depository institutions such as Maryland-chartered banks, trust companies, bank holding companies, and credit unions, as well as nondepository entities such as money transmitters, check cashers, consumer lenders, sales finance companies, installment lenders, mortgage lenders, mortgage loan originators, credit services businesses, debt management services providers, debt settlement services providers, consumer reporting agencies, and collection agencies. OFR’s activities are funded primarily through two special funds for depository and nondepository institutions, respectively.

State Expenditures: OFR lacks the capacity or expertise to staff the task force with existing personnel. Therefore, special fund expenditures for MD Labor increase by \$49,438 in fiscal 2027, which assumes a 90-day start-up delay from the bill’s July 1, 2026 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one full-time contractual administrative specialist to staff the task force, as required. It includes a salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

Contractual Position	1.0
Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$40,297
Operating Expenses	<u>9,141</u>
Total FY 2027 State Expenditures	\$49,438

Future year expenditures reflect full salaries with annual increases and employee turnover as well as annual increases in ongoing operating expenses and the termination of the bill (and the staffing) on June 30, 2028.

This estimate does not include any health insurance costs that could be incurred for specified contractual employees under the State's implementation of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 454 of 2025.

Designated Cross File: HB 470 (Delegate Boafu, *et al.*) - Economic Matters.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Labor; Department of Legislative Services

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caw/mcr

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