

Commission on Local Government

Estimate of Local Fiscal Impact
2010 General Assembly Session

Bill: HB 478 **Patron:** Carrico **Date:** January 21, 2010

In accordance with the provisions of §30-19.03 – 30-19.03:1.1 of the Code of Virginia, the staff of the Commission on Local Government offers the following analysis of the above-referenced legislation:

I. Bill Summary

HB 478 adds Va. Code § 15.2-1412.1 to require every locality to establish a database of citizen-reported issues and requests for information and the governmental responses to such citizen inquiries. The bill further requires that each issue and request be assigned a unique serial number. In addition, the bill requires that such database be maintained in a format that allows public access via the Internet and that the database be organized in a manner that allows information to be searched and sorted. Finally, the bill requires localities to establish a procedure whereby the citizen making the inquiry may choose not to have his name appear in the database.

II. Fiscal Impact Analysis

The Commission on Local Government received fiscal impact statements from 16 localities – the Counties of Arlington, Campbell, Henrico, New Kent, Prince Edward, Prince William, Pulaski, Rappahannock, Roanoke, Rockingham and Spotsylvania and the Cities of Danville, Hopewell, Lynchburg, Roanoke and Winchester.

Of the responding localities, only the City of Lynchburg indicated that HB 478 will require no additional expenditure. Lynchburg currently utilizes a system that could be modified to accomplish the requirements of the bill, though such modification would necessitate the dedication of about one person-month of effort by existing information technology staff.

Two localities – the City of Roanoke and Pulaski County – each estimated that they would experience additional expenditures of less than \$5,000. The City of Roanoke currently uses a system that could be modified to meet the requirements in the bill. Pulaski County would have to build and maintain a system.

Thirteen localities – the Counties of Arlington, Campbell, Henrico, New Kent, Prince Edward, Prince William, Rappahannock, Roanoke, Rockingham and Spotsylvania and the Cities of Danville, Hopewell and Winchester – each estimated that they would experience additional expenditures of more than \$5,000 to implement the bill's provisions. Most localities collaborated with their in-house information technology

departments to produce these estimates, though some localities based their estimates on actual quotes from vendors. The localities' estimates for annual operating costs ranged from no additional expenditure/within existing resources to \$3,690,984, and their estimates for nonrecurring start-up costs ranged from \$1,500 to \$6,226,150. Their estimates for **total first year cost** to the locality ranged from \$12,150 to \$6,226,150 as follows:

Winchester City	\$ 12,150
Hopewell City	\$ 14,000
Rappahannock County	\$ 15,000
Rockingham County	\$ 35,000
Spotsylvania County	\$ 50,000
Campbell County	\$ 50,000
Prince Edward County	\$ 62,716
Danville City	\$ 115,000
Roanoke County	\$ 146,000
New Kent County	\$ 380,000
Prince William County	\$ 500,000
Arlington County	\$4,200,000
Henrico County	\$6,226,150

A number of localities expressed concern about the security of information contained in the database and citizens' privacy and the costs associated with building and maintaining a system that allows public access via the Internet that would adequately address these issues.

III. Conclusion

The fiscal impact of HB 478 will vary considerably from locality to locality depending on whether the locality currently utilizes a database that is compatible with or can be modified to satisfy the bill's requirements or the locality must develop, build and/or procure such a system. The annual costs associated with operating and maintaining such a database will also vary from locality to locality depending on whether the locality's existing information technology resources will be adequate to handle the anticipated increase in workload. Finally, the size of the jurisdiction will impact the number of citizen inquiries and governmental responses that must be handled by the system as well as the number of citizens who may choose not to have their names appear in the database.