

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 565

(Senators Ready and West)

Budget and Taxation

Maryland Stadium Authority - Sale of Shamrock Farms to Carroll County

This bill establishes that the Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA) may not sell, transfer, or otherwise dispose of the property known as Shamrock Farms except as delineated. The bill authorizes the County Commissioners of Carroll County to purchase Shamrock Farms and requires MSA to sell it to the county under the conditions specified in the bill. The county commissioners must notify MSA by July 1, 2029, of their intent to purchase the property; if they do not, the requirement to sell and the terms of the sale are abrogated. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: State revenues may be affected as discussed below. State expenditures for ongoing maintenance of the property may be affected by the timing of any sale.

Local Effect: To the extent that Carroll County elects to purchase the property, it benefits from favorable terms in the bill. County revenues through donations to purchase the property may increase, as authorized under the bill.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: Shamrock Farms is the real property located at 4926 Woodbine Road, Woodbine, Maryland 21797, the purchase of which was approved by the Board of Public Works (BPW) on May 7, 2025.

The County Commissioners of Carroll County may purchase and MSA must sell Shamrock Farms to the county for \$4,480,000. However, this price is to be increased by a reasonable amount for inflation (as determined by BPW) and decreased by any amount that Carroll County contributed to the State's purchase.

By July 1, 2029, the county commissioners must notify MSA of their intent to purchase Shamrock Farms. That purchase may be paid for in equal installments over a five-year period, funded with monies from the county's general fund as well as any donations specifically for that purpose. If Shamrock Farms is transferred to Carroll County, all rights and authority over Shamrock Farms, including any zoning authority, transfer to the county.

If the county commissioners do not notify MSA of their intent to purchase Shamrock Farms by July 1, 2029, the bill is abrogated and of no further force or effect. MSA must notify the Department of Legislative Services within 15 days after either (1) receiving the county's notice of intent to purchase or (2) the county's failure to provide such notice by the deadline.

Current Law: For State-owned real or personal property that was funded by an appropriation act of the General Assembly and has an appraised value over \$100,000, specific disposal requirements are applied to the sale, transfer, grant, or exchange of the property. However, the requirements do not apply to (1) the leasing property; (2) the sale, transfer, grant, or exchange of a corrective or access easement on the property; or (3) an exchange conducted and specified by the Department of Natural Resources.

MSA may acquire, lease as landlord or tenant, hold, encumber, or dispose of property. Generally, any real or personal property owned by the State or a unit of the State government may be sold, leased, transferred, exchanged, granted, or otherwise disposed of:

- to any person, to the United States, or any unit of the State government for a consideration that BPW decides is adequate; or
- to any county or municipal corporation in the State, subject to any conditions imposed by BPW.

Generally, the governing body of a county may:

- acquire, by lease, purchase, gift, devise, bequest, condemnation, or any other method, an interest in any property that is needed for a public purpose;
- construct buildings on the property for the benefit of the county;
- sell surplus property at public sale, after advertising the sale for at least 20 days; or

- provide wholly or partly for the financing of housing or a housing project and place a deed of trust, mortgage, or other instrument on the financed property to ensure repayment of money used to purchase, construct, rehabilitate, or develop the housing or housing project.

Additionally, in Carroll County, the county commissioners or a public agency of the county may not take final action to purchase real property unless the action is taken at a public meeting. If the price of the property is \$7,000 or more, the county must provide public notice of the intent to purchase the real property at least 15 calendar days before the meeting. These requirements do not apply to the procurement of an option to purchase real property.

State Fiscal Effect: State revenues from the sale of Shamrock Farms are likely affected; however, the impact depends on MSA's plans for selling the property absent the bill. If MSA would otherwise sell the property, revenues are affected to the extent that the bill results in a different timeframe for the sale and a different sales price. For example, the bill could delay that sale – by three or more years – and the amount received for the property could be lower than could be obtained. Further, the bill's authorization for payment by Carroll County to be made in equal installments over five years likely further delays receipt of proceeds from a sale. On the other hand, if MSA were to determine that it would otherwise retain the property, then a requirement to sell it – only to Carroll County, if the county wishes to make the purchase – results in an increase in State revenues.

Likewise, State expenditures for maintenance of the property are affected to the extent the bill either spurs a sale that otherwise would not happen or delays a sale that could occur sooner.

Local Fiscal Effect: Carroll County likely benefits from a more favorable set of terms to purchase Shamrock Farms than might happen in the absence of the bill. Assuming that the property may have become available for purchase anyway, the bill guarantees that the county is the purchaser and establishes the purchase price as well as the option for payment in five equal installments. Carroll County has at least three years before it must purchase the property – notification of the *intent* to purchase must be made within three years; however, the bill does not specify the timing for a purchase after that notification. Also, the bill authorizes Carroll County to use donations to purchase the property.

Additional Comments: On May 7, 2025, BPW approved the purchase by the State of Maryland of the property known as Shamrock Farms for \$4,480,000. BPW identified the funding source for the purchase as the Racing and Community Development Financing Fund. At the time, the Maryland Thoroughbred Racetrack Operating Authority (MTROA) had selected the property to be developed as a new thoroughbred training facility in the State. However, MTROA was terminated by the Budget Reconciliation and

Financing Act of 2025, with MSA one of two successor agencies. Indeed, BPW identified MSA as the agency to assume ownership of all properties acquired by MTROA, including Shamrock Farms. MSA has since abandoned efforts to use Shamrock Farms as the training facility.

It is unclear whether proceeds from the sale of Shamrock Farms would accrue to the special fund from which the purchase was made or to the general fund; that determination likely depends on the terms of sale to be approved by BPW.

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: HB 1215 (Delegate Stonko, *et al.*) - Appropriations.

Information Source(s): Carroll County; Board of Public Works; Maryland Stadium Authority; Department of Legislative Services

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caw/ljm

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