

Taylor proposes corporate income tax cut, stricter drunk driving law

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Increased funding for public schools, a tax credit for constructing "environmentally friendly" buildings and stricter drunk-driving laws were part of the legislative package unveiled yesterday by Speaker Casper R. Taylor Jr., D-Allegany, on behalf of the House leadership.

Taylor also announced plans to cut the 7 percent corporate income tax by computing taxes based "solely on [a company's] percentage of in-state sales," according to a statement released by Taylor's office.

"The legislation proposed by the House will create a more favorable tax environment for businesses and manufacturers located in our state," the statement said. "The bill

would be revenue-neutral and would not create a deficit in the state treasury."

Another House leadership initiative would create a task force to study the cost of repairing and replacing "outdated" sewer systems such as the one that dumped 4.4 million gallons of raw sewage into the Jones Falls in July.

Some of the House leadership's proposals — such as increased funding for K-12 education and a bill to encourage smart growth — support initiatives announced earlier yesterday by Gov. Parris N. Glendening.

Much like Glendening's Smart Growth initiative, one House bill would "propose a study, with Virginia and the District of Columbia, to create a regional transportation authority to streamline the [planning] process and marry the

benefits of sensible transportation projects and prudent land use," according to the Speaker's notes.

Taylor also will look to pass stronger drunk-driving laws as a way to save federal transportation money.

Failure to adopt the 0.08 blood-alcohol concentration standard by 2004 will cost the state at least \$2 million each year in federal highway funding, Taylor noted, and failing to adopt the lower level by 2007 could cost the state up to \$55 million in federal fines.

The House leadership also unveiled plans to create an "Office of Women's Health" within the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to "serve as an information clearinghouse for women's health and apply for grants to help fund women's health programs," according to the announcement.

Another bill, modeled after a Vermont program, would provide prescription drug benefits for poorer Marylanders, while another would provide medical insurance coverage for parents of children who received care under Medicaid.

Taylor also announced plans to "improve the regulatory process that governs the professional relationships involving our legislators in Annapolis.

"Though Maryland has some of the strictest ethics laws in the country," according to Taylor's statement, "the House will propose increased regulations and reporting requirements that will further preserve the integrity of the legislature."

Other House leadership bills would look at protecting consumer privacy, establish a juvenile justice advisory commission and spend more public money to attract tourists.



TAYLOR: TAX CUT

