

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
1999 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 164 (Delegate Morhaim)

Environmental Matters

Priority Funding Areas - Growth-Related Projects - Limitations

This bill prohibits the State from funding a growth-related project in a priority funding area if the priority funding area abuts an area in another county that is: (1) designated a rural legacy area; or (2) zoned as agricultural. The State may provide funding for a growth-related project in a priority funding area that abuts land in another county that is zoned as agricultural if: (1) the State notifies the other county of the proposed growth-related project at least 90 days before the funding of the project or the project is submitted to the General Assembly in the budget; and (2) the other county is given the opportunity to submit written comments on the impact of the project on the county's agricultural land that abuts the project. Written comments must be submitted by the county within 60 days of receiving notice of the proposed project. Failure by the county to submit written comments may not delay funding of the project.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Minimal impact on State operations and finances. It is assumed that overall funding in priority funding areas would not change significantly.

Local Effect: Indeterminate impact on local government finances.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Fiscal Analysis

Local Effect: Any local governments with planned development in priority funding areas that abut another county's designated rural areas would not be eligible for State funds after October 1, 1999. To the extent that this alters a county's development plans, the county could be adversely impacted. Projects abutting agricultural land would still be eligible for State funding. However, it is possible that these projects would not receive funding if the counties that abut the projects provide written comments to the State and the State concurs. The potential loss of State funds for county projects cannot be reliably estimated at this time. However, the losses could be significant.

For example, Carroll County reports that most of the county's priority funding areas abut rural legacy and agricultural areas of Frederick, Baltimore, and Howard counties. As a result, projects such as the Lehigh Cement expansion, the Sykesville Police Training Center, and any expansion to the Hampstead Wastewater Treatment Plant would not be eligible for State funding. Harford and Prince George's counties report that they would not be significantly impacted by the bill's requirements.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Agriculture; Department of Budget and Management; Department of Business and Economic Development; Maryland Department of the Environment; Maryland Office of Planning; Carroll, Harford, Montgomery, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, and St. Mary's counties; Department of Legislative Services

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