

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2001 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 1126 (Delegates Cane and Owings)
Environmental Matters

Fox Chasing on Private Property

This bill prohibits a person from engaging in fox chasing on land owned by another person without first obtaining written permission. A person who violates the prohibition is liable for any damage the person or the person's dogs cause to the private property, whether or not the person physically entered the property. If a person violates the bill's prohibition and damage is caused to the private property, the person is guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction of a first offense is subject to a fine not exceeding \$1,000. Upon conviction of a second or subsequent offense, the person is subject to a fine not exceeding \$2,000.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Potential increase in general fund revenues due to the bill's penalty provision for those cases heard in the District Court. Enforcement could be handled with existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Potential meaningful. To the extent that the bill reduces fox chasing in Maryland, small businesses that benefit from the sport would be negatively impacted. According to the Department of Natural Resources, the Maryland Association for Wildlife Conservation conducted an economic analysis of the effect of fox chasing on the Maryland economy. The study concluded that the sport of fox chasing directly contributes an estimated \$23 million annually.

Analysis

Current Law: In general, a person may not come to hunt upon any pretense whatsoever on lands owned by another person without the permission of the landowner or the landowner's agent or lessee. Any person hunting on private property shall be liable for any damage he or she causes to the private property while hunting. In specified counties, a person must obtain written permission to hunt on private land. Also, in specified counties, a person who hunts with a gun or other weapon upon the lands of another without first obtaining written permission is guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction of a first offense is subject to a fine not exceeding \$1,000. Upon conviction of a second or subsequent offense, the person is subject to a fine not exceeding \$2,000. "Hunt" excludes the sport of fox chasing.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Natural Resources, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader – March 1, 2001
ef/jr

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