

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2011 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 1027 (Delegate Ross)

Health and Government Operations

Finance

Health - Youth Camps - Definitions

This bill alters the definition of “residential camp” for certification purposes. Specifically, the bill defines “residential camp” as a youth camp operating at a facility or campsite at which a camper lives apart (or intends to live apart) from the camper’s relatives, parents, or legal guardians for at least six – rather than five – consecutive days. The bill further specifies that a youth camp operating at a facility or campsite at which a camper lives apart (or intends to live apart) from the camper’s relatives, parents, or legal guardians for *five* consecutive days is considered a “day camp” for certification purposes.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund revenues decrease by no more than \$600 annually due to the reclassification of certain residential youth camps as day camps. Expenditures are not affected.

Local Effect: The bill’s requirements do not directly affect local finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: In general, “youth camp” or “camp” means any camp that (1) accommodates at least seven campers who are unrelated to the person operating the camp; and (2) provides primarily recreational activities or has a substantial outdoor recreational component. “Residential camp” means a youth camp operating at a facility or campsite at which a camper either lives apart or intends to live apart from the camper’s relatives, parents, or legal guardians for at least five consecutive days.

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) must monitor, inspect, and certify youth camps. Typically, this is accomplished through local health departments. The application fee for certification or renewal is \$100 for camps other than day camps, for which the fee is \$75. (Day camps operate for fewer than 24 hours per day.) In general, DHMH regulations make few distinctions between residential and nonresidential camps with regard to safety requirements. However, nonprimitive residential camps are required to have more toilets and hand-washing units per camper than are nonresidential camps. In addition, while all youth camps must have a health treatment area, residential camps must have a health treatment area that meets additional requirements (such as running water). There are also certain standards for sleeping facilities (*i.e.*, bedding must be sanitary).

The fiscal 2011 budget reduced temporary assistance for summer camp inspections by \$101,000. This reduction included 20 temporary inspectors and 1 temporary data entry clerk. As a result, fewer than 10% of camps that required inspections during fiscal 2011 were actually inspected.

State Fiscal Effect: DHMH estimates that fewer than two dozen camps would, under the bill, no longer be considered residential camps. However, DHMH is tasked with inspecting and certifying youth camps, regardless of whether the camps are residential. The inspection fee is \$100 for residential camps and \$75 for day camps. It is therefore assumed that general fund revenues decrease by no more than \$600 annually under the bill.

Additional Comments: HB 72/SB 87, the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act (BRFA) of 2011 as introduced, includes a provision that would require the alternative accreditation of youth camps beginning in fiscal 2012. Thus, if the provision is enacted, youth camps will no longer be certified by the State. However, proposed amendments to the BRFA of 2011 remove the alternative accreditation provision and rely instead on a proposed fee increase through regulations to enable inspection.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 381 (Senator Pinsky) - Finance.

Information Source(s): Cities of Baltimore, Frederick, and Havre de Grace; Prince George's and Montgomery counties; Department of Natural Resources; Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 21, 2011
ncs/mwc Revised - House Third Reader - March 30, 2011

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