

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

House Bill 868 (Delegate McKay)
Health and Government Operations Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Washington County - Fire, Rescue, and Ambulance Service - Local Authority

This bill specifies that the Washington County Commissioners are the ultimate authority having jurisdiction over the provision of fire, rescue, and ambulance services in Washington County.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: The bill does not materially affect Washington County operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The Washington County Commissioners, with the advice of the Washington County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association, may provide specifications for equipment, service area designations, and operations in the best interest of the volunteer fire, rescue, and ambulance departments in the county. Any volunteer fire, rescue, or ambulance department which is incorporated and approved and recognized by the Washington County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association and the county commissioners which does not meet the standards for equipment, service areas, or operations of the Washington County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association, or any other criteria adopted by the county commissioners, is ineligible for any appropriations from the county commissioners, and any appropriations may be denied, withheld, or curtailed. Any fire, rescue, or ambulance company or department failing to meet the requirements set by the

county commissioners must suspend operations immediately after notification that a majority of the county commissioners has directed the cessation of operations.

The Washington County Commissioners are authorized to provide loans to approved volunteer fire or rescue companies for the purchase of fire or rescue equipment, land, or buildings to be used by those companies. The loans must be in the amounts and terms approved by the county commissioners.

Background: The Washington County Division of Emergency Services (DES) oversees emergency communications/911, emergency management, fire department special operations, fire department support services, and the emergency medical services operations program. DES is led by a full-time career director and deputy director. There are 86 full-time and part-time personnel working directly within the division and approximately 40 volunteers. County funding for the division totals \$1.2 million in fiscal 2016.

In addition, the Washington County fiscal 2016 budget includes \$7.2 million in funding for the Washington County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association. The association provides funding for operations and equipment to 28 volunteer fire and rescue companies in Washington County.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 516 (Washington County Senators) - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

Information Source(s): Washington County; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 22, 2016
md/hlb

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