

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2017 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

House Bill 24 (Delegate McConkey, *et al.*)  
Environment and Transportation

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Natural Resources - Forest, Park, and Wildlife Rangers - Parking Citations

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This bill authorizes a forest, park, and wildlife ranger who is not commissioned as a law enforcement officer to issue a citation for a parking violation on (1) property owned by the State and managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR); (2) public and private property that is within the boundaries of State property managed by DNR; (3) public and private property that adjoins property owned by the State and managed by DNR; and (4) a roadway within the boundaries of, or that portion of a roadway that adjoins, property owned by the State and managed by DNR.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2017.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** None. DNR indicates that it does not employ “forest, park, and wildlife rangers,” as they are identified in statute, who are not commissioned as law enforcement officers. Therefore, the department does not expect to use the authority provided by the bill.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** The Secretary of Natural Resources is required to, within the limits of any appropriation made for such purpose, commission forest, park, and wildlife rangers, as necessary, for specified enforcement of laws and regulations. An employee who has been

commissioned and assigned law enforcement duties has and may exercise the powers of a Natural Resources police officer or a law enforcement officer of the State on specified property, including State property managed by DNR.

Pursuant to provisions of the Maryland Vehicle Law, any State agency authorized by law and any political subdivision of the State may adopt ordinances or regulations that, among other things, regulate parking of vehicles and provide for the issuance of a citation by an officer for a violation of an adopted ordinance or regulation. "Officer" means a police officer or a person other than a police officer who is authorized to issue a citation for a violation of an adopted ordinance or regulation.

**Background:** DNR undertook an effort in 2005 to consolidate the law enforcement functions of the Maryland Park Service (MPS) and the Natural Resources Police (NRP), shifting all law enforcement responsibility to NRP. A total of 91 MPS law enforcement officers (rangers) were transferred to NRP, and currently only 7 remain with MPS, serving in management roles.

Under Department of Budget and Management (DBM) personnel classifications, "park ranger" classifications are commissioned law enforcement officers. DNR indicates that MPS employees referred to as park rangers (a working title approved by DBM) have the personnel classification of "park services associate."

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Natural Resources; Department of Budget and Management; Department of State Police; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 23, 2017  
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