

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

Senate Bill 222

(Chair, Finance Committee)(By Request - Departmental - Health)

Finance

Health and Government Operations

State Board of Environmental Health Specialists – Quorum, Examination, and Apprenticeships

This departmental bill (1) authorizes applicants seeking licensure as an environmental health specialist (EHS) to complete an approved “apprenticeship” instead of an environmental health specialist-in-training (EHSIT) program; (2) clarifies that an EHSIT participating in an EHSIT program or an individual participating in an apprenticeship are exempt from the licensure requirement; (3) authorizes the State Board of Environmental Health Specialists (BEHS) to approve an examination provider to administer the licensure examination; and (4) clarifies what represents a *quorum* for BEHS. The board must adopt regulations that include the requirements for board approval of an apprenticeship and the minimum and maximum duration of an apprenticeship.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill’s requirements, including adopting regulations, can be handled with existing budgeted resources. To the extent the number of EHS licenses issued increases under the bill, BEHS special fund revenues increase by an indeterminate amount beginning as early as FY 2025, as discussed below.

Local Effect: The bill does is not anticipated to materially affect local government operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) has determined that this bill has minimal or no impact on small business (attached). The Department of Legislative Services concurs with this assessment.

Analysis

Bill Summary/Current Law: Under current law, with specified exceptions, an individual must be licensed by BEHS before the individual may practice as an EHS in the State. An EHSIT is exempt from the licensure requirement.

The bill specifies that an individual may practice as an EHS if they are an EHSIT *participating in an EHSIT program* or an individual participating in an apprenticeship. The bill defines “apprenticeship” as a program of training and experience under the supervision of a licensed EHS that is part of the requirements for a board-approved bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university.

Educational and Experience Requirements

Chapters 318 and 319 of 2023 altered the educational and experience requirements for applicants seeking licensure as an EHS. Two possible combinations of education and experience can lead to licensure as an EHS.

Option 1:

Training: 12 months in an EHSIT program, and

Education: a bachelor’s degree that includes (1) 30 semester credit hours or equivalent quarter credit hours of chemical, physical, biological, or environmental sciences acceptable to BEHS; (2) a course in mathematics; and (3) laboratory coursework as required in regulations adopted by BEHS.

Option 2:

Training: a 3-month internship approved by BEHS, and

Education: a master’s degree in public or environmental health science that includes (1) 30 semester credit hours or 45 quarter credit hours of chemical, physical, biological, or environmental sciences – obtained at the baccalaureate or master’s level – including laboratory coursework as required in regulations adopted by BEHS and (2) a course in mathematics.

For Option 1, the bill authorizes an individual to train for 12 months in an EHSIT program or complete a board-approved apprenticeship.

Licensing Examination

Under current law, BEHS must *give* an examination to applicants at least once a year and notify all qualified applicants of the time and place an examination is to be held. The bill authorizes BEHS to approve an examination provider to administer the required

examination, under which circumstance the board must notify each qualified applicant of the registration procedure.

State Board of Environmental Health Specialists Quorum

BEHS comprises nine members appointed by the Governor with the advice of the Secretary of Health, and the advice and consent of the Senate. Of the nine members, seven must be licensed EHS and two must be consumer members. Under current law, a majority of the board is a *quorum*. The bill clarifies that a majority of *appointed members of the board is a quorum to do businesses*.

Background: MDH advises that authorization of an apprenticeship program as a means to gain experience for EHS licensure will help BEHS recruit qualified applicants and may allow potential applicants to complete education requirements while practicing under the supervision of a licensed EHS. MDH further advises that efforts to create a template for an approved apprenticeship program are underway. According to the Maryland Association of County Health Officers, an apprenticeship program would improve the pipeline for licensed EHSs and address the critical workforce shortage, especially at local health departments.

State Fiscal Effect: To the extent the number of EHS licenses issued by BEHS increases under the bill, BEHS special fund revenues increase to reflect additional applicable licensure fees beginning as early as fiscal 2025. Any such increase is indeterminate but is anticipated to be minimal.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Association of County Health Officers; Maryland Department of Health; Maryland Department of Labor; Department of Natural Resources; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 26, 2024
js/jc Third Reader - February 13, 2024

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ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC IMPACT ON SMALL BUSINESSES
Maryland Department of Health
Session 2024

BILL TITLE: **State Board of Environmental Health Specialists – Quorum,
Examination, and Apprenticeships**

BILL NUMBER: SB 222

PREPARED BY: Linda Beyer

(Program\Unit): Health Occupations Boards & Commissions/State Board of
Environmental Health Specialists

PART A. ECONOMIC IMPACT RATING

This agency estimates that the proposed bill:

WILL HAVE MINIMAL OR NO ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND SMALL
BUSINESS

OR

WILL HAVE MEANINGFUL ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND SMALL
BUSINESSES

PART B. ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

The proposal has no economic impact.