

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 722 (Senator Derr, et al.)
Economic and Environmental Affairs

**Carroll, Frederick, and Washington Counties - Forest Conservation Act -
Limited Exemption**

This bill exempts land in Carroll, Frederick, and Washington counties classified in a commercial or industrial zoning district from the requirements of the Forest Conservation Act.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill does not directly affect State finances.

Local Effect: Indeterminate decrease in revenues and expenditures.

Fiscal Analysis

Background: The Forest Conservation Act provides that before an application for sediment and erosion control or subdivision is approved, a forest conservation plan must be approved for the site. This plan identifies and protects any forests located in sensitive areas on the site, including stream buffers, steep slopes, and floodplains. The forest conservation plan also provides for forest retention on the site consistent with the established land use; or through payment made into a local fund for reforesting sensitive areas.

Local Effect: A local forest conservation program has been adopted and implemented in Carroll, Frederick, and Washington counties. There would be a decrease in workload due to a decrease in reviewing such activities, however, it is expected that any freed resources would be dedicated to other functions.

Local revenues would decrease due to a loss of fee revenues. Frederick County anticipates a decrease of \$9,000 to \$15,000 in revenues due to fewer review and inspection fees. In addition, the county will lose fees from developers of commercial projects who would have decided to pay a reforestation fee rather than replant. Two or three major projects would generate revenues of \$30,000 to \$50,000. Any lost reforestation fee revenues would be accompanied by a commensurate decrease in expenditures on reforestation activities.

Washington County reports that it would have a revenue decrease of \$1,000 due to review fees, and \$20,000 in reforestation fees. Carroll County currently does not collect any review or reforestation fees.

Information Source(s): Department of Natural Resources; Carroll, Frederick, and Washington counties; Department of Fiscal Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 1, 1996
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