

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 754 (Delegate Cryor, et al.)
Environmental Matters

State Parks - Charges - Nonresidents

This bill requires the Secretary of Natural Resources to charge a higher fee to nonresidents of Maryland for admission to or overnight camping at a State park.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Indeterminate effect on special fund revenues and expenditures.

Local Effect: Indeterminate effect on revenues and expenditures.

Fiscal Analysis

State Effect: Initially, any increase in fees for out-of-state visitors will increase special fund revenues. The amount of increase will depend upon the fee differential that is chosen. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) reports that a nonresident surcharge of \$1 per night could be charged for overnight camping, and \$0.50 per person could be charged for State park admissions.

DNR currently receives approximately \$1,133,500 in special fund revenues from out-of-state visitors. If out-of-state residents continue to visit Maryland parks at the same rate, this would result in additional revenues of \$156,900. However, it is likely that some nonresidents would decide not to visit Maryland parks because of the fee increases. Many nonresident visitors come from population centers such as Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Richmond, and the DC metro area; these visitors could decide to visit parks in Pennsylvania or Virginia instead. Of the states bordering Maryland, only Delaware has an out-of-state visitor fee different from in-state.

It is not feasible to predict at this time the number of nonresidents that would decide not to

visit Maryland parks. However, DNR advises that based on prior experience with a higher nonresident fee, it assumes a 4% decrease in out-of-state use per year. Under such a scenario, revenues would increase by \$105,300 in fiscal 1997, but would actually decrease by \$37,500 in fiscal 2000.

State expenditures on parks and forests will increase or decrease depending upon the funding available.

Local Effect: Local counties receive a grant based on a percentage of State park revenues. These revenues would be affected as discussed above. Additionally, local governments may see increased use of local park facilities from out-of-state residents; many of these facilities do not have an entrance fee.

Information Source(s): Department of Natural Resources, Department of Fiscal Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 12, 1996

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