

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 874 (Washington County Delegation)
Environmental Matters

Washington County - Forest Conservation Exemption

This bill exempts land in Washington County 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 Washington County. 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. Washington County reports that no new positions were created to administer this program.

Local revenues would decrease due to a loss of fee revenues. Washington County anticipates a decrease of \$2,000 in revenues due to fewer review and inspection fees. In addition, the county will lose fees from applicants who would have decided to pay a reforestation fee rather than replant. Such reforestation fees generate approximately \$40,000 in revenues per year. Any lost reforestation fee revenues would be accompanied by a commensurate decrease in expenditures on reforestation activities.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 1, 1996

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Analysis by: Kim E. Wells

Reviewed by: John Rixey

(410) 841-3710

(301) 858-3710

Direct Inquiries to:

John Rixey, Coordinating Analyst