

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE
Revised

House Joint Resolution 18 (Delegate Guns, et al.)
Environmental Matters

Referred to Finance

**Port of Baltimore and Related Waterways - Dredging Maintenance and
Improvement**

The amended joint resolution resolves that there is a critical need to develop and implement a long-term strategy to maintain and improve various shipping channels. Further, the General Assembly urges appropriate federal, State, and local governments and their agencies to:

- explore available sites for environmentally sound open water placement for short-term maintenance and improvement needs;
- complete site selection and permit approval processes for at least two upper bay containment and beneficial use projects prior to implementing Phase II of the Poplar Island Project; and
- design Phase I of the dredge placement site at Poplar Island not to exceed 640 acres with a dike no greater than 15 feet in height.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Compliance with this resolution could potentially increase State special fund expenditures and result in a loss of federal fund revenues.

Local Effect: None.

Fiscal Analysis

State Effect: A joint resolution is an expression of legislative intent only; hence, State revenues and expenditures are not directly affected. Should compliance with this resolution be rendered, however, State finances could be affected. The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) already has studies on dredging placement ongoing and budgeted. However, to the extent that sites currently targeted for study are not suitable, additional study

expenditures could be necessitated by the need to find two upper bay sites for dredging placement before Phase II of Poplar Island is initiated. In addition, MDOT advises that to complete site selection and permit approval processes for additional sites would take a minimum of six to seven years. It would take even longer if initial sites are not chosen and new sites need to be found. It is not known at this time if open water placement and Phase I of Poplar Island would be sufficient to handle the dredging needs of waterways during this delay period; this would depend in large part on the amount of open water placement deemed environmentally safe.

The current federal fund appropriation in the proposed federal fiscal 1997 budget includes \$22 million for the full 1,100 acre Poplar Island project. It is unclear at this time if Maryland would be eligible for these federal funds if the Poplar Island project is divided into two phases as urged by the joint resolution.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 31, 1996

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