

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 9 (Delegate Curran, et al.)
Commerce and Government Matters

Election Laws - Electronic Ballots

This bill authorizes the use of electronic ballot voting systems in Maryland. These systems must have a means of controlling individual electronic ballots and collecting each voter's choices. For security reasons, electronic systems must also have the capability to show the total number of voters who have operated the system. In addition, the bill authorizes the State Administrative Board of Election Laws (SABEL) to electronically notify local elections boards of SABEL's certification of election ballots.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. If SABEL chooses to notify the local elections boards electronically, it could do so with existing resources.

Local Effect: If a county chooses to lease or purchase electronic voting systems, county expenditures could increase by an indeterminate significant amount as discussed below. Revenues could increase by an indeterminate amount.

Fiscal Analysis

Local Effect: Since the bill is authorizing in nature, county expenditures would not be affected. If a county chooses to buy or lease an electronic voting system, county expenditures could increase by an indeterminate amount depending upon the type of voting system, method of purchase (buy or lease), number of voting systems, and the type of service contract. If a county obtains a new electronic voting system, it could sell the old machines in a secondary market. At this time, the revenue generated from a sell-off cannot be reliably estimated.

Business Records Corporation (BRC) currently provides optical scan voting systems,

including training and maintenance services, to 15 counties. **Exhibit 1** shows the actual annual costs for the 15 counties under contracts with BRC and estimated costs for the remaining nine counties.

Baltimore City estimates that it would cost approximately \$3.5 million to purchase an electronic voting system. This expenditure increase could be partially offset by selling the current voting machines in a secondary market. Any revenues collected from a sell-off of the old machines cannot be determined beforehand.

Information Source(s): State Administrative Board of Election Laws; Baltimore City; Harford, Queen Anne's, and St. Mary's counties; Business Records Corporation; Department of Fiscal Services

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