

Department of Fiscal Services  
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 409 (Delegate Poole, et al.)  
Judiciary

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**Division of Correction Agricultural Pilot Program**

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This bill establishes the Division of Correction Agricultural Pilot Program to use inmate labor to produce food or food ingredients for use within State correctional institutions.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Indeterminate increase in general fund expenditures. No effect on revenues.

**Local Effect:** None.

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**Fiscal Analysis**

**State Expenditures:** The Division of Correction (DOC) advises that it is unable to estimate the fiscal effect of this bill. The bill could require purchase of suitable agricultural land, equipment, and supplies, as well as additional correctional staff and wages for inmate workers to supervise the program.

The Department of Fiscal Services advises that expenditures would depend on the scale of the pilot program and the type of food that would be produced. A small plot to grow fresh vegetables, operating seasonally, constructed on existing DOC property, and using minimum-security inmates, could be started with minimal additional staff and equipment. On the other end of the spectrum, the DOC could purchase land to produce vegetables, livestock, and/or dairy products year-round that would require perimeter security, structures, and a substantial number of correctional officers.

The Department of Fiscal Services further advises that prison industry products are generally more expensive than products produced by the private sector due to fewer economies of scale and because the programs are generally designed to be labor-intensive. Operating expense

was the primary reason the DOC closed the farm it operated in the Hagerstown area.

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**Information Source(s):** Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (Division of Correction), Department of Fiscal Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 13, 1996

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