

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Joint Resolution 12 (Senator Stone)
Economic and Environmental Affairs

Baltimore County - Public Schools - Testing for Environmental Hazards

This joint resolution requests the Baltimore County Board of Education to implement a program of comprehensive annual inspections of public school buildings in which environmental hazards have been detected.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Compliance with this joint resolution could increase Baltimore County expenditures by an indeterminate amount. Revenues would not be affected.

Small Business Effect: Minimal. Small businesses providing environmental inspections could benefit to the extent that this resolution requires additional inspections and the school system contracts out the inspections to private companies.

Fiscal Analysis

Local Expenditures: Because a joint resolution is an expression of legislative intent only, compliance is not required and local finances are not directly affected. However, to fully implement this joint resolution, Baltimore County expenditures could increase by \$328,000 as discussed below.

There are 160 public schools in Baltimore County (100-elementary, 25-middle, 25-high, 3-alternative high, 3-alternative middle, and 4-special education). The Baltimore County School System currently conducts a system-wide asbestos inspection every six months at a cost of \$500 per school and periodic indoor air quality inspections at a cost of \$750 per school. In addition, a comprehensive asbestos inspection by companies approved by the

federal Environmental Protection Agency is conducted every three years at a cost of \$1,300 per school. The Baltimore County School System advises that once an environmental hazard has been detected in a school, students are removed until the hazard has been eliminated.

The actual impact on county expenditures would depend upon the meaning of environmental hazards. In the past, Baltimore County school officials have reported only a few severe environmental hazards within schools. Under the school system's interpretation of an environmental hazard, the cost to comply with this resolution would be minimal. However, if the meaning of environmental hazards is interpreted more broadly, the county may have to inspect every school at a cost of \$328,000 (160 schools X \$2,050 inspection cost). This estimate includes the cost of comprehensive asbestos inspection (\$1,300) and indoor air quality inspection (\$750).

Information Source: Baltimore County School System, Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Fiscal Services

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Analysis by: Hiram L. Burch Jr.

Reviewed by: John Rixey

Direct Inquiries to:

John Rixey, Coordinating Analyst

(410) 841-3710

(301) 858-3710