

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 498 (Senator Dyson)
(Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas Oversight Committee)
Economic and Environmental Affairs Referred to Environmental Matters

**Chesapeake Bay Critical Area - Commercial Timber Harvest - Criteria for Buffer
Overlap**

This amended bill provides that commercial harvesting of trees may be allowed in the areas where Critical Area buffers and Habitat Protection Areas overlap so long as allowable cutting procedures are followed in accordance with an approved buffer management plan. A buffer management plan must be prepared for all commercial harvests within the buffer regardless of acreage cut, and must meet specified minimum requirements.

The bill is effective June 1, 1997.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. Procedures for Critical Area Timber Harvest Plan reviews would not be affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Potential meaningful impact on small businesses as discussed below.

Fiscal Analysis

Small Business Effect: According to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), overall within Critical Areas, 300 commercial harvestings have occurred since 1989; this bill would extend the areas in which harvestings may occur.

In Maryland, there are 396 logging companies, 165 sawmills, and 37 tree chipping companies. The majority of these are considered small businesses. However, the bill's provisions only affect operations in Critical Areas and presumably would not directly affect companies located in Western Maryland. Excluding companies located in Garrett and Allegany counties, there are 174 logging companies, 108 sawmills, and 7 whole tree companies located throughout the State.

In addition, small businesses that own land in the overlap areas affected by the bill could also benefit from being able to sell selected lumber to the logging companies.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 19, 1997
brd Revised - Senate Third Reader - March 13, 1997

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