

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 20 (Delegate Arnick. *et al.*)

Judiciary

Courts - District Court Facilities in Baltimore County

This bill requires the District Court to maintain a court facility in the Dundalk area. Under current law, this requirement will sunset on June 30, 1999.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures of approximately \$112,000 for the District Court facility in Dundalk would continue indefinitely. Revenues would not be affected.

Local Effect: Minimal incidental expenditures by local governments, particularly Baltimore County, would continue indefinitely. Revenues would not be affected.

Small Business Effect: Potential meaningful.

Fiscal Analysis

State Effect: State expenditures of approximately \$112,000 would be maintained because the bill requires continued operation of the District Court facility in Dundalk. If the Dundalk facility is closed, the judge and all courthouse staff except the principal supervisor would be moved to another District Court location. Closing of the Dundalk facility would save the State rent and other operating expenses related to the Dundalk site, which in fiscal 2000 would be approximately \$72,441. Elimination of the principal supervisor position would save an estimated \$39,496 in fiscal 2000. Total savings under current law for fiscal 2000 would therefore be \$111,937.

The District Court believes that it has the ability to function more efficiently without the Dundalk facility. When multiple courtrooms exist at one site, cases can be transferred from courtroom to courtroom as some judges conclude their dockets early and other judges are backlogged. This cannot be done at the Dundalk site because it houses only one judge. As a result, people involved in legal matters at the Dundalk facility are required to wait longer periods of time than they would if the court facilities were consolidated.

Closing the Dundalk facility would result in increased efficiency and convenience for the State due to reduced travel and waiting by State government personnel (Public Defenders, probation agents, law enforcement officers, etc.) who would no longer be required to visit the Dundalk facility.

Local Effect: Maintaining the Dundalk facility would result in continued minimal incidental expenditures for local governments, particularly Baltimore County, due to the travel and waiting done by local government personnel (State's Attorneys, County Attorneys, law enforcement officers, etc.) who are required to visit the Dundalk facility.

Small Business Effect: Any small businesses that depend upon the operation of the Dundalk facility as a source of revenues would be favorably impacted by this bill. The number of businesses that are dependent on the Dundalk facility and the extent of their dependence are unknown. Possible examples of dependent small businesses are nearby law firms and restaurants.

Information Sources: Judiciary (District Court of Maryland), Office of the Public Defender, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 28, 1998

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