

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 500 (Senators Derr and Ferguson) (Frederick County Senators)

Judicial Proceedings

Frederick County - Criminal Justice Technology Enhancement Fund

This bill establishes a Criminal Justice Technology Enhancement Fund in Frederick County. The fund is to be made up of \$5 charges to be assessed by the District Court and circuit court against each person convicted of a criminal offense. The fund is to be administered by a seven-member oversight committee, which must use the fund to purchase equipment for technical support services, such as computers, typewriters, and radio communications equipment, for all criminal justice and law enforcement agencies in the county.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Increase in general fund expenditures of at least \$22,500 in FY 1999, and an indeterminate reduced amount in subsequent years. No effect on revenues.

Local Effect: Increase in special fund revenues and expenditures of approximately \$5,490 annually, which could be fully or partially offset by administrative expenses.

Small Business Effect: Potential minimal.

Fiscal Analysis

State Expenditures: This bill would require modification of the District Court's automated criminal system, cash register, and courtroom systems as well as automated accounting system, to allow a special fund to be established specifically for Frederick County. Normally, fees collected by the District Court are a source of general fund revenues. It is estimated that the design and implementation of these changes would cost approximately \$22,500. It is likely that the State would incur additional administrative costs associated with the recordation, collection, and transfer of the proposed fees.

Local Effect: In fiscal 1997, approximately 2,196 defendants were convicted of a criminal offense in either the District Court or circuit court of Frederick County. At this rate, the fund would be entitled to \$10,980 in revenues annually to spend on technology enhancement equipment. However, it could be difficult to collect this money from criminal defendants, especially since some defendants are incarcerated at the time of sentencing. In fiscal 1997, court costs were collected from only 510 criminal defendants out of 1,229 convicted of a criminal offense in Frederick County District Court (41%). Assuming a 50% collection rate, it is estimated that the fund would receive approximately \$5,490 due to this surcharge.

These revenues could be fully or partially offset by expenses necessary to administer the fund in circuit court, in a similar manner as for District Court.

Small Business Effect: Small computer, office equipment, and telecommunications businesses could benefit to the extent that the fund purchases merchandise from them.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts, District Court of Maryland); Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 24, 1998
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