

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE
 Revised

House Bill 503 (Delegate Frush)
 Environmental Matters

Tree Experts - Definition

This bill alters the definition of “tree expert” to include persons who represent themselves to the public as skilled in the trimming, pruning, thinning, cabling, shaping, felling, or reducing the crown of trees. These persons are thus subject to regulation by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: DNR special fund revenues should increase by \$3,000 in FY 1999, which reflects anticipated staggered registration. Out-year revenues reflect a staggered registration as well as annual renewal fees. No effect on expenditures.

(in dollars)	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003
SF Revenues	\$3,000	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
SF Expenditures	0	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	\$3,000	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$3,000	\$3,000

Note: () - decrease; GF - general funds; FF - federal funds; SF - special funds

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal impact on small businesses due to the fee requirements. This bill places a new requirement on some small firms involved in tree related activities that were previously unregulated.

Fiscal Analysis

State Effect: There are currently 300 firms with licensed tree experts operating in the State. It is estimated that this bill will increase the number of tree experts required to be licensed from 700 to approximately 1,000. Under current law these additional 300 individuals are not considered to be tree experts and licensing is not required. DNR estimates that roughly 50% of all firms practicing in the State are involved solely in the felling of trees. Most of these firms are small (one or two individuals), part-time operations. Firms that are currently involved in this type of activity will now have to have at least one licensee. Employees under the supervision of a licensed tree expert do not have to have a license in their own name.

It is anticipated that not all unlicensed firms will become licensed in the first year, as some will continue to operate until they are cited by DNR. It is assumed that approximately 100 applicants per year over the next three years will meet the education and testing requirements necessary to obtain a tree expert license. A \$30 fee is charged to first-time applicants for tree expert licenses. Each subsequent year, there is a \$10 license renewal fee charged.

Departmental expenditures will not be affected by this bill. Enforcement activities can be handled with existing resources. Tree expert exams are currently administered twice a year and will continue as such.

Information Source(s): Department of Natural Resources, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History:	First Reader - February 19, 1998
Inc	Revised - House Third Reader - March 27, 1998

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