

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 695 (Senator Middleton)

Economic and Environmental Affairs

Hunting - Wild Waterfowl

This bill revises the current law relating to the hunting of wild waterfowl. It revises the procedure for the licensing of offshore “blind sites” and “stationary blind sites,” including eligibility requirements and location requirements. The bill also exempts landowners who own more than 500 yards of shoreline from filing an application for each site if multiple sites are located on the property, as required under current law.

The bill provides that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will send renewal notices to landowners who previously received a license or whose shoreline was previously excluded from blind site licensing. It also provides that blind site licenses will be issued in a manner that DNR determines the most cost-effective and convenient. DNR must locate and construct blinds on public land so that the public is provided a greater access and use of wild waterfowl. DNR is to encourage local and federal governments to make available to the public land under their jurisdiction for hunting of wild waterfowl.

The bill takes effect October 1, 1999.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Minimal special fund revenue loss beginning in FY 2000. Enforcement would continue with DNR’s existing resources.

Local Effect: Minimal reduction in local revenues and corresponding expenditures.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Fiscal Analysis

State Effect: In 1997, 4,150 blind site licenses at a cost of \$11 each were purchased through the local clerks of the court. Under current law, the clerk of the court keeps \$1 from each license sold; thus the revenue collected by DNR from blind site licenses in 1997 was \$41,500. This bill would transfer the responsibility of issuing licenses from the clerks of the court to DNR. This would result in all revenues collected from blind site licenses going to DNR.

Under current law, landowners with more than 500 yards of shoreline are required to file a separate application and pay an \$11 fee for each site. The bill allows landowners to file one application and pay one fee for multiple sites located on their property. DNR advises that approximately 20% of licenses sold are to landowners with multiple sites on one property. As a result, of the \$1 increase for each license sold and the revenue loss associated with multiple site licenses, DNR estimates that it will lose approximately \$4,980 in licensing fees beginning in fiscal 2000.

The bill also requires that DNR send a renewal notice to all riparian landowners who received a license or whose shoreline was excluded from blind site licensing by the public the previous year. DNR advises that the printing of applications and the postage required would cost approximately \$1,200 annually beginning in fiscal 2000 and could be absorbed within existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: The local clerks of the court will lose \$4,150 in revenue from the issuing of licenses which would be offset by a reduction in expenditures associated with issuing licenses.

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

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Inc

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