

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 1338 (Delegate Poole)

Judiciary

Police Dogs - Liability for Harm

This bill makes a person liable for the purchase, care, and training costs of a replacement police dog if the person, while in the act of committing a crime for which the person is later convicted, kills, maims, or otherwise harms a police dog used by a law enforcement agency so as to force the police dog out of service.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Indeterminate decrease in general fund expenditures. Revenues would not be affected.

Local Effect: Indeterminate decrease in expenditures. Revenues would not be affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Fiscal Analysis

State Expenditures: The State Police get police dogs in one of two ways: the dogs are given to the department, or they are purchased from a security company. If the dog is given to the department, the department must train the dog and the officer who will handle the dog. The training period is approximately 12 weeks for the dog and approximately three weeks for the officer. If the dog is purchased, the dog is already trained and the officer would require only a few weeks of training with the dog. Dogs purchased from a security company cost approximately \$3,000 and come with a guarantee.

The State Police have approximately 60 dogs in the canine unit. Approximately 10% of the dogs are incapacitated in the line of duty during the year. Under this bill, the defendant responsible for killing, maiming, or otherwise harming a police dog is liable for the purchase, care, and training costs associated with a replacement police dog. If the dog is given to the police department and trained by the police department, the defendant would be responsible for the costs of care and training. If the police dog is purchased, the defendant could be liable for at least \$3,000 per police dog, as well as the additional costs associated with the care of the police dog. Accordingly, general fund expenditures could decrease to the extent that State law enforcement agencies would not have to pay to replace the out of service police dogs. However, any actual savings would depend upon a convicted defendant's ability and willingness to make payment.

Local Effect: Local law enforcement agencies with canine units usually are given dogs to train as police dogs, or purchase them the same way that the State Police do. Accordingly, local expenditures would decrease to the extent that local law enforcement agencies would not have to pay to replace the out of service police dogs. However, any actual savings would depend upon a convicted defendant's ability and willingness to make payment.

Information Source(s): Department of State Police; Dorchester, Garrett, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 19, 1998

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Analysis by: Guy G. Cherry

Reviewed by: John Rixey

Direct Inquiries to:

John Rixey, Coordinating Analyst

(410) 841-3710

(301) 858-3710