

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
1999 Session

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 201 (Senators Ferguson and Mooney) (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 \$32,500 in FY 2000, and an indeterminate reduced amount in subsequent years. No effect on revenues.

Local Effect: Increase in special fund revenues and expenditures of approximately \$3,043 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.) The District Court estimates that the design and implementation of these changes would cost approximately \$32,500. 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 1998, a total of 1,217 defendants were convicted of a criminal offense in Frederick County District Court and circuit court. At this rate, the fund would be entitled to \$6,085 in revenues annually to spend on technology enhancement equipment. However, it could be difficult to collect this money from criminal defendants, because some defendants are incarcerated at the time of sentencing. Assuming a 50% collection rate, it is estimated that the fund would receive approximately \$3,043 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

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