

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
1999 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 1102 (Delegate Walkup)

Environmental Matters

Hunting Licenses - Funds - Wildlife Habitat Improvement

This bill requires the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to use specified funds from hunting licenses to improve wildlife habitat in the State. The department is authorized to use the funds from hunting licenses to improve wildlife habitats by (1) hiring contractual employees to implement wildlife habitat initiatives provided through State and federal conservation programs; (2) providing matching funds for wildlife habitat development to landowners in the State; or (3) entering into contracts with farmers in the State to reimburse the farmer for planting and leaving unharvested grains, grasses, and legumes in the fields to provide food or cover crops for wildlife.

This bill takes effect July 1, 1999.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Overall Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program Account revenues and expenditures would not change. Potential increase in federal matching funds.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Fiscal Analysis

State Effect: Under current law, DNR is required to use any funds generated by the increase in fees that are charged for each nonresident hunting license and \$10.00 of each fee charged for a nonresident three-day license only for the purpose of feeding game birds and mammals in the State. The department is authorized to enter into contracts with farmers in the State to reimburse the farmer for planting and leaving grains, grasses, and legumes, including clover,

alfalfa, and soybeans, unharvested in the fields in order to be used to provide feed for any game birds and mammals in the State. All fees are paid into the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program Account (WHIP) of the Wildlife Management and Protection Fund.

The bill alters what the funds in the WHIP account may be used for. There is no change in the funding mechanism. As a result, overall revenues and expenditures would not change. In fiscal 1998, program revenues totaled \$158,945 and expenditures were \$134,741.

In addition, the department reports that as a result of hiring contractual employees to work on wildlife habitat improvement projects, as provided for in the bill, it could be eligible for increased federal matching funds for these types of projects. However, the amount of any federal matching funds that may be available cannot be reliably estimated at this time.

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

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