

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
1999 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 786 (Delegate Linton)

Environmental Matters

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Wildlife Management Plans

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This bill provides that public land owned or managed by State or local units and land owned by charitable organizations is subject to the requirements of a wildlife management plan. The governing body of a county or municipal corporation is required to grant a property tax credit for 10% of the property tax to an owner of private real property that adopts and implements a wildlife management plan. The Department of Natural Resources must develop eligibility criteria for land that is subject to wildlife management plan requirements. The department is required to adopt regulations to implement the provisions of the bill.

This bill takes effect July 1, 1999.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** Indeterminate increase in State expenditures beginning in FY 2000. No effect on revenues.

**Local Effect:** Indeterminate revenue decrease and expenditure increase. **This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.**

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

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## Fiscal Analysis

**State Effect:** The Department of Natural Resources advises that it would require five additional employees (five biologists) at a cost of \$233,396 in fiscal 2000 to implement and maintain the wildlife management program established by the bill.

However, the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) advises that absent regulations outlining the various eligibility requirements, particularly potential minimum acreage requirements, it is difficult to estimate just how many acres of land would need to adopt wildlife management plans. As a result, DLS advises that until regulations are adopted that specify the various eligibility requirements, DNR could likely handle the bill's requirements with existing budgeted resources. If, once the program is established, DNR's existing resources prove inadequate, additional employees could be requested via the normal budgetary process.

**Local Effect:** The tax credit provided by the bill is a mandatory credit against the county and municipal property taxes. To the extent that land subject to local property taxes is under wildlife management plans, local revenues would decrease. In addition, local government expenditures would increase by an indeterminate amount as a result of having to establish wildlife management plans on locally owned land. However, the amount of any revenue decrease or expenditure increase cannot be reliably estimated at this time.

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**Information Source(s):** Department of Assessments and Taxation; Department of Natural Resources; Carroll, Harford, Montgomery, Prince George's and Queen Anne's counties; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 3, 1999

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