

Department of Legislative Services  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 1999 Session

FISCAL NOTE  
 Revised

Senate Bill 607 (Senator Stoltzfus)

Economic and Environmental Affairs

**Somerset County - Power Dredging for Oysters**

This bill adds specified additional areas in the waters of Somerset County where a person may catch oysters by power dredge during the power dredging season, November 1 through March 30. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is required to establish zones by regulation within the areas specified in the bill where power dredging is allowed. The bill also requires DNR to establish by regulation an oyster sanctuary of not less than 100 acres in one of those areas and prohibits power dredging for oysters in the sanctuary. Additionally, DNR is authorized to establish a program to purchase oysters from a person who has a power dredge license. The oysters, which shall be purchased at not less than market price, shall be transplanted for restoration purposes to the oyster sanctuary. Power dredging for oysters is also prohibited in any area closed to hydraulic clam dredging. The department is required to adopt regulations preserving areas on a rotational basis for restoration and harvesting purposes. Finally, DNR must establish by regulation an appropriate penalty to be assessed against a person convicted of taking oysters from a sanctuary or reserved area.

This bill takes effect June 1, 1999 and sunsets May 31, 2004 except for the provisions relating to the oyster sanctuary.

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** General fund expenditure increase of \$39,500 annually beginning in FY 2000. Potential minimal fine revenue increase.

(in dollars)	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004
GF Revenues	-	-	-	-	-
GF Expenditures	\$39,500	\$39,500	\$39,500	\$39,500	\$39,500
Net Effect	(\$39,500)	(\$39,500)	(\$39,500)	(\$39,500)	(\$39,500)

*Note: ( ) = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - =indeterminate effect*

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

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### Fiscal Analysis

**State Effect:** DNR reports that existing Natural Resources Police (NRP) resources would be used to carry the provisions of the bill. However, patrolling the new areas that are designated for power dredging as well as oyster sanctuary established by the bill, would require additional NRP time. Accordingly, overtime and costs associated with increased patrol boat operation would increase by approximately \$28,960. In addition, the NRP Hydrographic Section would need to place 28 new bouys delineating the new dredging areas and sanctuary at a cost of \$8,560. Finally, the department will commit to spend approximately \$2,000 each year to purchase oysters for the development of the oyster population in the sanctuary. As a result, total fiscal 2000 expenditures would increase by approximately \$39,520.

The bill requires DNR to adopt penalties for persons catching oysters in the sanctuary. To the extent that DNR levies monetary penalties on violators, general fund revenues could increase. Any such increase is assumed to be minimal.

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

**Fiscal Note History:**

First Reader - March 1, 1999

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Revised - Senate Third Reader - April 2, 1999

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