

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 140 (Chairman. Environmental Matters Committee)
 (Departmental - Agriculture)

Environmental Matters

Department of Agriculture - Weights and Measures - Fees

This departmental bill increases the annual registration fees for weights and measures used commercially in the State by 10%.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2000.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Special fund revenue increase of \$95,000 in FY 2000 due to an increase in registration fees. Future year estimates are adjusted by 1.5% to reflect the estimated increase in registered devices. The Governor’s proposed budget for FY 2001 includes anticipated increases in special fund revenues in the Weights and Measures Fund.

(\$ in dollars)	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005
SF Revenues	\$95,000	\$96,400	\$97,900	\$99,300	\$101,000	\$102,300
SF Expenditures	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	\$95,000	\$96,400	\$97,900	\$99,300	\$101,000	\$102,300

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

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) has determined that this bill has minimal or no impact on small business (attached). Legislative Services concurs with this assessment.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The bill increases the annual registration fees for weights and measures used for commercial purposes as follows:

Weight/Measure	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
scales - capacity up to 100 pounds	\$14.00 (max. per location, \$175.00)	\$15.00 (max. per location, \$205.00)
scales - capacity 100 to 2,000 pounds	\$40.00	\$44.00
scales - capacity more than 2,000 pounds	\$75.00	\$82.50
belt conveyor scales	\$300.00	\$330.00
railroad track scales	\$300.00	\$330.00
vehicle scales	\$150.00	\$165.00
grain moisture meter	\$50.00	\$55.00
retail motor fuel dispenser meter - under 20 gallons per minute	\$15.00 (max. per location, \$275.00)	\$16.00 (max. per location, \$310.00)
retail motor fuel dispenser meter - 20 gallons per minute or more	\$35.00	\$38.50
bulk petroleum fuel meter - 20 gallons per minute to 150 gallons per minute	\$35.00	\$38.50
bulk petroleum fuel meter - 150 gallons per minute or more	\$70.00	\$77.00
liquefied petroleum gas meter - 3/4 inch diameter or less	\$50.00	\$55.00
liquefied petroleum gas meter - greater than 3/4 inch diameter	\$75.00	\$82.50

Current Law: Unless a registration for a weight and measure is renewed for a one-year term, the license expires one year from the effective date of the registration. Before a registration expires, the registration may be renewed for an additional one-year term if the applicant is the owner or possessor of a weight and measure, pays the applicable fee, and submits a renewal application.

Background: The Weights and Measures Section of the Department of Agriculture inspects

and certifies the accuracy of measuring and weighing devices in the State to ensure that fairness and equity persist in all commercial transactions involving determination of quantity.

In 1992, when the State was faced with a revenue shortage, a special fund was established to help defray program operating expenses. Revenue for the fund comes from registration fees paid by the 8,370 owners of weighing and measuring devices used commercially within the State. Current fees generate approximately \$950,000 annually. The fee for registering weighing and measuring devices has not been increased since the special fund was established. According to MDA, additional revenue is needed to cover rising employee salary and benefit costs. MDA reports that staffing levels have remained the same while the number of devices required to be inspected and certified has increased approximately 1.5% annually.

State Fiscal Effect: Currently, the fees from the registration of weights and measures generate approximately \$950,000 annually in special fund revenue. Because the bill increases the fees by 10%, it is estimated that special fund revenues will increase by approximately \$95,000 in fiscal 2000. MDA advises that all fees are payable at the end of the fiscal year. Thus, because the bill takes effect June 1, 2000, fees for registering weights and measures for fiscal 2000 will be subject to the increased fees. Future year estimates are adjusted by 1.5% to reflect the increase in the number of weighing and measuring devices that are required to be registered annually. All fees from the registration of weights and measures are paid into the Weights and Measures Fund. The budget for fiscal 2000 included an increase in revenues for the Weights and Measures Fund in anticipation of the passage of HB 220 of 1999 which would have removed maximum fee restrictions for registering specified weights and measures. MDA advises that because HB 220 was not enacted, the fiscal 2000 revenues will fall short of the budgeted amounts. This bill will cover that deficit for fiscal 2000, allowing for continued planned program activity. The Governor's proposed budget for fiscal 2001 reflects the increase in special fund revenue resulting from this bill, but does not make expenditures contingent upon enactment of this bill.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 220 of 1999 would have removed maximum fee restrictions for registering each weight and measure used for a retail motor fuel dispenser meter under 20 gallons per minute. The Environmental Matters Committee reported the bill unfavorably.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Agriculture, Department of Legislative Services

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cm/jr

Analysis by: Lesley Frymier

Direct Inquiries to:
John Rixey, Coordinating Analyst
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510