

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Joint Resolution 13 (Delegate Owings)

Environmental Matters

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Oxygenated Fuel

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This joint resolution urges the United States Congress to repeal the oxygenate content requirements in the federal Clean Air Act and to encourage reliance upon clean-burning, non-oxygenate fuel formulations that meet the air quality standards established in that Act. The joint resolution urges the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to provide more aggressive enforcement and oversight of federal underground storage tank regulations.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** Compliance with this joint resolution would not directly affect State finances.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** Federal law mandates the addition of oxygenates in reformulated gasoline to reduce the concentration of various types of air contaminants in regions of the country exceeding federal National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

**Background:** Methyl tertiary-butyl ether (MTBE), the most commonly used gasoline oxygenate in the United States and Maryland, is being detected with increasing frequency in surface and groundwater throughout the United States due to leaking underground petroleum storage tanks, spills, and other accidental discharges. In 1998, the EPA formed a blue ribbon panel to investigate concerns raised by the discovery of MTBE in some water supplies due to public health concerns. The panel recommended in July 1999 that the EPA work with

Congress and the states to implement reforms to ensure that water supplies are better protected. The panel made the following recommendations:

- substantially reduce the use of MTBE while ensuring no loss in air quality benefits;
- enhance public drinking water monitoring and remediation programs;
- enhance enforcement of underground storage tank replacement and upgrade programs; and
- enhance public education and clean-up programs for gasoline spills.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Department of the Environment, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 18, 2000  
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