

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 804 (Delegate Owings)

Environmental Matters

Natural Resources - Director of Water Response - Establishment

This bill establishes a Director of Water Response under the Natural Resources police force in the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The director will be responsible for the implementation and oversight of all State “water response” activities performed by DNR, the Department of State Police, and any other unit of State or local government. The director must: (1) coordinate State on-site and administrative activities relating to a water response situation; (2) establish a central office to organize, implement, and oversee responses; (3) develop and implement State training for a water response situation; (4) catalogue the equipment and human resources available for a water response situation; and (5) develop and recommend to the Secretary of Natural Resources and the Secretary of the State Police water response equipment needs and standards. The Secretary of Natural Resources may adopt regulations to implement the bill.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditure increase of \$474,800 in FY 2001 to hire the director and other staff necessary for the implementation and oversight of all water response activities and related duties. Future year expenditures are annualized, adjusted for inflation, and reflect ongoing operating expenses. No effect on revenues.

(in dollars)	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005
GF Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditures	474,800	414,500	431,700	449,700	468,600
Net Effect	(\$474,800)	(\$414,500)	(\$431,700)	(\$449,700)	(\$468,600)

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

Local Effect: Minimal. It is assumed that local personnel, in handling water response

activities coordinated by DNR pursuant to this bill, could manage any changes with existing budgeted resources. It is also assumed that local personnel involved in water response activities would participate in the training program established by DNR pursuant to the bill. Any operational efficiencies that could be derived from a more coordinated water response program cannot be reliably estimated at this time.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: There is no Director of Water Response under the Natural Resources police force in DNR.

Background: DNR is not responsible for the implementation and oversight of all water response activities in the State. Currently, the Natural Resources police respond only to water-related emergencies and boating accidents. DNR is the lead agency for responding to boating accidents.

State Expenditures: General fund expenditures could increase by an estimated \$474,800 in fiscal 2001, which accounts for the bill's October 1, 2000, effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one sergeant and five corporals to implement and oversee all State water response activities performed by DNR, other State agencies, and local governments, and perform the other functions required by the bill. The estimate includes salaries, fringe benefits, overtime, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses. The information and assumptions used in calculating the estimate are stated below:

- the sergeant will serve as the director;
- one corporal in each of five regions of the State (all regions except Western Maryland) will be needed to support the duties of the director;
- six vehicles will be purchased at \$25,000 per vehicle;
- each vehicle will travel approximately 23,000 miles annually;
- one laptop computer for each corporal (\$3,000 each) and one desktop computer for the central office will be purchased;
- the central office will be established in existing facilities; and

- any additional costs to establish the central office will be absorbed within existing budgeted resources.

Salaries and Fringe Benefits	\$259,800
Overtime	9,000
Automobile Purchases	150,000
Automobile Operations	32,400
Computer Purchases	17,000
Clothing	6,000
Other Operating Expenses	<u>600</u>
Total FY 2001 State Expenditures	\$474,800

The estimate does not include any water response equipment that the director will recommend, pursuant to the bill, to the Secretary of Natural Resources and the Secretary of the State Police. Any such expenditures cannot be reliably estimated at this time.

Legislative Services advises that because the bill requires DNR to be responsible for all State water response activities, including those now performed by other agencies, it is possible that other State agencies could realize a decrease in expenditures related to water response activities. Because the bill does not specify what “implementation and oversight” of all water response activities includes, any such decrease cannot be reliably estimated at this time.

If DNR’s role in non-DNR water responses is limited only to coordination activities, Legislative Services advises that the director, with existing DNR resources, could handle those responsibilities without five additional corporals. If that were the case, expenditures would decrease accordingly.

Any operational efficiencies that could be derived from a more coordinated water response program cannot be reliably estimated at this time.

Future year expenditures reflect: (1) full salaries with 4.5% annual increases and 3% employee turnover; and (2) 1% annual increases in ongoing operating expenses. The estimates assume that overtime costs will remain at approximately \$12,000 annually.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Natural Resources, Department of State Police, Montgomery and Prince George's counties, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 1, 2000

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