

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Joint Resolution 6 (Senator Dvson)

Economic and Environmental Affairs

Environment - Solid Waste Management - Voluntary Statewide Diversion Goal

This joint resolution establishes a voluntary statewide goal of reducing the amount of waste going to disposal facilities by 40% by the year 2005. This diversion goal would be accomplished by reducing waste generated at the source and by expanding existing recycling programs through the cooperative efforts of waste generators, State agencies, local governments, the waste industry, the recycling industry, environmental groups, boards of education, and other interested parties. Each county's diversion rate is defined as the sum of its recycling rate plus up to 5% for counties that qualify for a source reduction credit. The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) would determine qualifications for the source reduction credit. The county mandatory recycling rates of 15% and 20% would be maintained, and counties should be provided an incentive to make the effort to recycle all solid waste and to report all solid waste recycled to MDE.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Compliance with this joint resolution could be handled with existing resources.

Local Effect: Expanding current recycling programs would be voluntary for local governments. Local jurisdictions choosing to reduce the generation of waste at the source could apply for a credit toward a waste diversion goal.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: Local jurisdictions are responsible for implementing recycling programs.

Each county must submit a recycling plan to MDE for approval. Generally, counties must recycle 15% or 20% of its solid waste stream, depending on the county's population. Counties must report their waste reduction activities to MDE, and MDE must annually report to the Governor and the General Assembly on the percentage reduction in the amount of solid waste that has been achieved by each county.

Background: The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is calling for 35% recycling by the year 2005. Because it preempts the need to collect, process, and dispose of trash, EPA believes that the best way to manage solid waste is to reduce the generation of waste at the source. One way to encourage source reduction is to provide a system by which counties can get credit toward a waste diversion goal for reducing waste at the source. Minnesota and Oregon have source reduction credit systems in place.

Through Maryland's mandatory recycling program, the State has received a 33% statewide recycling rate. Providing a higher voluntary goal will encourage local governments to maintain and possibly expand their current programs. Currently, counties do not get recognition for source reduction efforts. MDE has established a Source Reduction Work Group to devise a checklist for counties to report their source reductions in order to receive a credit. Applying for source reduction credits would be voluntary.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of the Environment; Montgomery, Prince George's, Washington, and Worcester counties; Department of Legislative Services

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