

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 857 (Senators Dorman and Bromwell)

Finance

Workers' Compensation Commission - Location of Hearing

This bill provides that a covered employee may elect to have a hearing on a claim before the Workers' Compensation Commission (WCC) held at: (1) a regional hearing location determined by the commission to be convenient to all parties; (2) a regional hearing location that covers the county in which the covered employee resided at the time of the injury or last exposure occurred; or (3) Baltimore City. If the employer is a government agency and hearings are not conducted in the county in which the governmental agency is located, a hearing may be held in the regional hearing location nearest that county's government offices.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures could increase by \$102,300 in FY 2001 to establish and operate two hearing sites, reflecting the bill's October 1, 2000, effective date. Out-year projections reflect the addition of three new sites, annualization, and inflation. Revenues would not be affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005
GF Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditures	\$102,300	\$182,800	\$118,200	\$119,400	\$120,500
Net Effect	(\$102,300)	(\$182,800)	(\$118,200)	(\$119,400)	(\$120,500)

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

Local Effect: Minimal.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: A covered employee may elect to have a hearing on a claim before the WCC held in: (1) the county in which the injury or last exposure occurred; (2) the county in which the covered employee resided at the time of the injury or last exposure occurred; or (3) Baltimore City. If the employer is a government agency and the covered employee does not object, the commission is required to conduct a hearing in the county in which the governmental agency is located, provided that the commission holds hearings in that county.

State Expenditures: When not conducting a hearing at its Baltimore City facility, WCC conducts a hearing at a location provided by the local jurisdiction in which the hearing is held. This bill would require WCC to acquire, equip, and maintain regional hearing facilities. WCC advises that it would establish five regional hearing locations throughout Maryland, two sites in fiscal 2001 and three additional sites in fiscal 2002. Facilities for the sites could be rented in existing structures.

General fund expenditures to establish and operate two sites in fiscal 2001 could be \$102,300, including rent and one-time start-up costs. Expenditures in fiscal 2002 could be \$182,800 to establish three additional sites and operate five locations, including rent and one-time start-up costs.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 1348 (Delegate Mitchell) - Rules and Executive Nominations.

Information Source(s): Department of Assessments and Taxation, Injured Workers' Insurance Fund, Workers' Compensation Commission, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 5, 2000
cm/jr

Analysis by: Ryan Wilson

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