

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 139 (Chairman, Environmental Matters Committee)
(Departmental - State Police, Dept. of)
Environmental Matters

State Fire Marshal - Powers and Duties - Inspectors

This departmental bill authorizes the State Fire Marshal to designate civilian employees to conduct inspections and submit reports. The bill also requires the minimum qualification for a civilian employee to be the completion of the National Fire Protection Association Standard 1031.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: While this bill would allow some operational efficiencies, it would not significantly alter overall activities or finances of the Office of the State Fire Marshal or the Department of State Police. To the extent that civilian employees are hired in lieu of sworn officers, personnel costs would decrease.

Local Effect: None.

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

Analysis

Current Law: Life safety inspections of nursing homes, day care centers, buildings, and businesses are required to be performed by sworn officers (Deputy State Fire Marshals).

Background: Chapter 410 of 1999 requires additional annual inspections of day care centers. Deputy State Fire Marshals take part in these inspections as well as perform criminal

investigations relating mainly to fires and explosions.

Allowing the State Fire Marshal to designate civilians to conduct inspections upon completion of the National Fire Protection Association Standard 1031 would mean that civilians could be hired or designated from existing staff and would not be required to attend a certified police academy and would not have the law enforcement authority granted to sworn officers.

The State Fire Marshal believes such designations would provide for more efficient and timely building inspections, and would allow for more uninterrupted criminal investigations by Deputy State Fire Marshals. Actions on violations found by civilian inspectors would be turned over to sworn personnel.

State Fiscal Effect: Whether the enactment of this bill would lead, eventually, to a perceived need by the State Fire Marshal for additional civilian staff cannot be reliably predicted at this time. In any event, this bill would produce a savings for the Office of the State Fire Marshal due to assumed differences in salaries between sworn personnel and civilian staff, and because training costs for completion of the National Fire Protection Association Standard 1031 are assumed to be less than certification by police academies. Police academy training for Deputy State Fire Marshals are provided by whichever public or private academy has openings at the time of the needed training. *The Department of State Police did not provide quantification of such cost differences.*

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of State Police (Office of the State Fire Marshal), Department of Legislative Services

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cm/jr

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