

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 479 (Senator Colburn)

Finance

Public Utilities - One-Call Systems - Information on Underground Facilities

This bill requires each owner-member of a one-call system to submit to the one-call system written or electronic documentation of the location, extent, and depth of all underground facilities owned or operated by the owner-member. The documentation of depth must be within an 18-inch margin of error from top to bottom. A one-call system must maintain an underground facility information database system of the information submitted by owner-members to the one-call system. A one-call system must provide information regarding underground facilities submitted by owner-members within 48 hours, through verbal, written, or electronic means, to a person who has contacted the one-call system and has requested the information as to a proposed excavation or demolition area.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Potential expenditure increases for certain State agencies.

Local Effect: Potential expenditure increases for certain local government entities.

Small Business Effect: Potential meaningful.

Analysis

Current Law: The bill's provisions would add to the existing statutes relating to excavation and demolition near underground facilities.

Background: A one-call system is a communications network in the State that allows a person to telephone a one-number utility protection system. An owner is an entity that owns or operates an underground facility and has the right to bury an underground utility. The bill defines "owner-member" as an owner that participates as a member in a one-call system.

The only one-call system currently operating in Maryland is Miss Utility (a corporation).

A person that intends to perform an excavation or demolition must notify, either directly or through the one-call system, each owner in advance. An owner must timely notify the excavator if the proposed excavation or demolition is within a certain proximity to an underground facility and mark the location of the underground facility.

State Fiscal Effect: State government entities that are owner-members could incur additional expenditures to comply with the bill. It is believed that many owner-members do not know the precise depth of their facilities. In addition, depths are subject to change due to erosion and other geologic forces. The costs that would be incurred by State owner-members to comply with the bill cannot be reliably estimated at this time.

The bill would require no action by the Public Service Commission.

Local Fiscal Effect: Local government entities that are owner-members could incur additional expenditures to comply with the bill.

Small Business Effect: Small businesses that are owner-members could incur additional expenditures to comply with the bill.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: A similar bill was introduced during the 1997 session as SB 908, but was withdrawn.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Public Service Commission, Department of Legislative Services

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drg/jr

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