

Department of Legislative Services  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2001 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 1005 (Delegate Stull, *et al.*)  
 Environmental Matters

Natural Resources - Deer Management Plan

This bill requires the Secretary of Natural Resources, in consultation with the Wildlife Advisory Commission, to develop, adopt, and implement a comprehensive plan to manage the deer population in Maryland by October 1, 2001. Beginning in fiscal 2002, the Governor shall include sufficient funds in the annual State budget to achieve the goals of the plan by October 1, 2007.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2001.

Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** General fund expenditure increase of \$683,400 in FY 2002 to effectively implement the existing deer management plan. Future year estimates are annualized, adjusted for inflation, and reflect ongoing operating expenses. No effect on revenues.

(in dollars)	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	683,400	629,200	656,700	686,100	717,300
Net Effect	(\$683,400)	(\$629,200)	(\$656,700)	(\$686,100)	(\$717,300)

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

**Local Effect:** Local jurisdictions will be involved with the implementation of the plan. The bill is not anticipated to significantly affect local operations or finances, but could benefit local jurisdictions to the extent they receive additional assistance from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

**Small Business Effect:** Meaningful.

## Analysis

**Current Law:** DNR may adopt regulations to enlarge, extend, restrict, or prohibit hunting wildlife. DNR may reduce the wildlife population in any county, election district, or other identifiable area of the State after a thorough investigation reveals that protected wildlife is seriously injurious to agricultural or other interests in the affected area. DNR must provide for a statewide system of assistance to political subdivisions regarding the disposition of wild animals. Assistance may include field services, training, or payment to local subdivisions for wildlife control in accordance with specified procedures and plans. Wildlife management activities are paid by the State Wildlife Management and Protection Fund. Revenues for the fund come from the sale of hunting licenses, stamps, and application/permit fees.

**Background:** Deer were relatively rare in Maryland in 1900. By 1998 Maryland's deer population had increased to an estimated 250,000. Increasing deer populations have been blamed for extensive damage including vehicle collisions, personal injury, property damage, and crop damage. In order to address these concerns, DNR, along with the Wildlife Advisory Commission, Maryland citizens, and interest groups, developed a comprehensive deer management plan that was released for public comment in 1998. The plan directs DNR to consult with counties, municipalities, and residential communities to develop deer management plans compatible with each community. The plan also directs DNR to investigate alternative innovative deer management options. The plan outlines four long-term goals and several objectives and strategies to meet those goals. The long-term goals are to: (1) ensure the present and future well-being of white tailed deer and their habitat; (2) maintain deer populations at levels necessary to ensure compatibility with human land uses and natural communities; (3) encourage and promote the recreational use and enjoyment of the deer resource; and (4) inform and educate Maryland citizens concerning deer biology, management options, and the impacts that deer have on landscapes and people.

DNR advises that it has begun to implement the plan. In fiscal 2000 DNR received a deficiency appropriation for nuisance wildlife control, deer management, and other activities. Deer management efforts have increased accordingly; however, DNR advises that existing funding is inadequate to fully implement the plan.

Many local governments and homeowners associations request DNR assistance to develop local deer management plans. Local task forces have been established in some jurisdictions, such as Howard and Montgomery counties, in order to develop and implement local deer management plans.

**State Expenditures:** The bill provides that beginning in fiscal 2002, the Governor shall include sufficient funds in the annual State budget to achieve the goals of the plan by

October 1, 2007. In order to achieve the plan's goals by that date, general fund expenditures could increase by an estimated \$683,400 in fiscal 2002, which accounts for a 90-day start-up delay. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring six natural resource biologists and four natural resource technicians to implement the plan. One of the natural resource biologists would lead the effort, one wildlife biologist would direct studies regarding urban deer, and one wildlife biologist and one technician would be assigned to each of the four regions of the State. The estimate includes salaries, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses including contractual services for aerial surveys of deer populations and research relating to the population dynamics of urban deer. The estimate assumes that each employee will require a vehicle and a pager, conduct work at night, and attend regional and national meetings on deer management.

Salaries and Fringe Benefits	\$337,100
Automobile Purchases	180,000
Automobile Operations	32,600
Contractual Services	71,200
Equipment	46,100
Other Operating Expenses	<u>16,400</u>
<b>Total FY 2002 State Expenditures</b>	<b>\$683,400</b>

Future year expenditures reflect: (1) full salaries with a 6.5% increase in fiscal 2003 and a 4.5% increase each year thereafter, with 3% employee turnover; and (2) 1% annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

**Small Business Effect:** Hunting is the primary tool used to manage deer populations. DNR advises that a report by the U.S. Department of Interior found that Maryland deer hunting resulted in \$40.4 million in retail sales in 1996. The projected impact on the State's economy totaled \$76.4 million. In addition to businesses affected by hunting, the bill could also affect several other types of businesses. Most farms are small businesses. A 1996 study by the University of Maryland found that grain farmers suffered crop losses of \$38 million annually due to deer. To the extent that the bill reduces crop damage, farmers will benefit. The bill could also affect vehicle owners and businesses involved in the repair of vehicles. Reported deer-vehicle collisions in Maryland doubled from 1988 to 1996. Property damage related to those collisions was estimated in 1998 at over \$9.7 million annually. Property owners and businesses could also be affected to the extent that the bill reduces damage to ornamental shrubs and gardens.

## **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Natural Resources, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader – February 22, 2001  
ef/jr

---

Analysis by: Lesley Frymier

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