

Department of Legislative Services

Maryland General Assembly

2002 Session

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 650

(Senator Bromwell)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Environment - Well Drilling Permits - Exemptions

This bill exempts specified individuals from obtaining a well-drilling permit from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). Specifically, a person would not be required to obtain a permit if the person drills a well to conduct temporary dewatering by use of well points, deep wells, or similar methods in order to install underground utilities.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. MDE has delegated the authority to issue well-drilling permits to local environmental health agencies.

Local Effect: Minimal decrease in local revenues from well-drilling permit fees (up to \$80 for each permit that would no longer be required). Local expenditures would not be materially affected.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: A person may not drill a well in Maryland unless the person obtains a permit. MDE has delegated the authority to issue well-drilling permits to local environmental health agencies. A county board of health may establish a permit fee to defray the cost of inspecting and testing wells. The fee may be charged before a permit is issued but may not exceed \$80 per well or \$80 per cluster of wells. A county board of health may waive the fee under specified conditions.

Background: MDE advises that approximately 11,000 to 12,000 wells are drilled each year. Of these, an estimated 7,000 wells are drilled to install new septic systems, and an estimated 3,000 are drilled for replacement wells. Accordingly, although the exact number of wells drilled to conduct temporary dewatering to install underground utilities is unknown, it could not be more than 1,000 annually statewide.

Local Revenues: Currently, local environmental health agencies may charge a fee of up to \$80 for a well-drilling permit. Because the number of individuals who would no longer need a permit under this bill is unknown, a reliable estimate of the total decrease in local revenues cannot be made at this time. However, any such decrease is not anticipated to be significant for any given local jurisdiction.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 788 (Delegates Klausmeier and Redmer) – Environmental Matters.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of the Environment, Department of Legislative Services

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Analysis by: Lesley Frymier

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