

Department of Legislative Services

Maryland General Assembly

2002 Session

FISCAL NOTE

Revised

House Bill 773

(Prince George's County Delegation and Montgomery County Delegation)

Judiciary

Judicial Proceedings

**Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission - Police Force
PG/MC 101-02**

This bill establishes the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) police force. A WSSC police officer may exercise law enforcement powers on property owned, leased, operated by, or under the control of WSSC and on non-WSSC property if the officer is: (1) engaged in fresh pursuit of a suspect; (2) requested or authorized to do so in a political subdivision; (3) needed for a traffic assignment involving WSSC property; or (4) ordered to do so by the Governor.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. Any operational costs associated with the promulgation of regulations or standards for the State Police or the Police Training Commission could be handled with existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: Minimal. This bill's primary effect would be to grant a status to WSSC police that would allow its officers to have access to national computerized criminal history information and records for persons or motor vehicles. WSSC would incur a one-time cost of about \$5,000 in FY 2003 for the purchase of necessary computer equipment. The bill's other provisions relating to the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights (LEOBR) and workers' compensation provisions are not expected to have a significant impact on WSSC or either county.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The bill requires WSSC, in consultation with the Department of State Police and the Maryland Police Training Commission, to adopt specified regulations and standards to carry out the bill's provisions. Any standards adopted after September 30, 2002 relating to minimum hiring qualifications of WSSC police officers may not affect the status of any individual who was a qualified WSSC special policeman on October 1, 2002.

The bill also includes the WSSC police force under LEOBR and existing insurance coverage presumptions relating to heart disease or hypertension for certain police officers under Maryland's workers' compensation provisions.

Current Law: WSSC has "special police officers" assigned to its Security and Safety Services Group. These officers have full police powers on WSSC property and while in fresh pursuit of criminal suspects. However, special police do not constitute a "police force" under Maryland law and, therefore, are not allowed access to records and information on criminal history backgrounds of individuals or motor vehicles.

Special police officers are not specifically covered under LEOBR or workers' compensation provisions.

Background: WSSC advises that access to criminal justice and motor vehicle records will significantly increase police officer safety when interacting with persons while performing law enforcement functions.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, Department of State Police, Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

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