

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2002 Session

**FISCAL NOTE**

Senate Bill 715        (Senator Colburn)  
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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**Land Use - Plans and Programs - Review and Revisions**

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This bill decreases the frequency with which specified reviews of local planning programs must be conducted. Specifically, the bill requires the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to conduct a review of each local authority's forest conservation and critical area programs at least once every six years in coordination with the review of the comprehensive plan by the planning commission as required under current law. The bill also requires each local jurisdiction to review its entire program and propose any necessary amendments to its entire program, including local zoning maps, at least every six years in coordination with the review of the comprehensive plan.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** The bill's changes could be handled with existing budgeted resources.

**Local Effect:** The bill's changes could be handled with existing local resources.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** A planning commission is required to include specified elements and visions in its comprehensive plan. At least once every six years, the planning commission must review and, if necessary, revise or amend a comprehensive plan to include the required elements and visions. Each local jurisdiction must adopt and include in their plans all of those elements and visions. At least once every six years, each planning commission must review and, if necessary, revise or amend the local comprehensive plan to include all of the required elements and visions.

DNR must conduct a review of each local authority's forest conservation program at least once every two years from the date of initial departmental approval. In its biennial review, DNR must evaluate the level of compliance with the performance standards and required forest conservation. Each local jurisdiction must review its entire critical area program and propose any necessary amendments to its entire program, including local zoning maps, at least every four years beginning with the four-year anniversary of the date that the program became effective and every four years after that date. Each local jurisdiction shall send in writing to the planning commission, within 60 days after each four-year anniversary, specified information.

**Background:** The major goals of the Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992 are reflected in seven statutory visions for growth, protection, and planning: (1) development is concentrated in suitable areas; (2) sensitive areas are protected; (3) in rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resource areas are protected; (4) stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic; (5) conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, is practiced; (6) to achieve the first five visions, economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined; and (7) funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these visions.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** This bill was introduced at the 2001 session as SB 563. The bill received an unfavorable report from the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Planning, Wicomico County, Allegany County, Montgomery County, Prince George's County, Talbot County, Department of Natural Resources, Baltimore City, Governor's Office (Office of Smart Growth), Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 28, 2002  
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Analysis by: Christopher J. Kelter

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