

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2002 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 156

(The Speaker)

(Department of Legislative Services)

Environmental Matters

Education, Health, and Environmental
Affairs

State Board of Foresters - Sunset Extension and Program Evaluation

This bill extends the sunset date for the State Board of Foresters from July 1, 2004 to July 1, 2015, and requires a sunset evaluation report of the board by July 1, 2014.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: State finances for the State Board of Foresters would continue beyond FY 2004. The FY 2003 general fund budget allowance for the board is \$2,000. The proposed 2003 budget assumes the board will generate \$19,430 in general fund revenues. Out-year revenues and expenditures are expected to remain relatively constant.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The State Board of Foresters termination date is July 1, 2004. The board has seven members, appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. There are no current vacancies on the board. The board's statutory authority requires five members of the board to be licensed foresters and two members to represent consumers. Each member of the board is required to be a resident of Maryland for at least three years and a citizen of the United States. The licensed forester members of the board are required to have practiced forestry for at least ten years. The term of a board

member is five years, and the terms are staggered. At the end of a term, a member continues to serve until a successor is appointed and qualifies. The board is required by law to meet twice per year.

Background: The State Board of Foresters is responsible for the licensure and regulation of foresters in the State. The authority is subject to the Maryland Program Evaluation Act, also known as the “sunset law,” which provides a system of periodic legislative review of the regulatory, licensing, and other governmental activities of various units of State government.

This bill arises out of the sunset evaluation of the State Board of Foresters performed by the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) during 2001. In its report, DLS recommended that the board be continued and its termination date be extended to July 1, 2015. In addition, DLS recommended that the board submit a follow-up report to the Legislative Policy Committee by October 1, 2002 on the status of: (1) the University of Maryland’s accreditation status for its forestry curriculum; (2) the development of urban forestry as a specialization in Maryland; (3) the development of the board’s Internet usage for public information and license processing; (4) any increase in the board’s activities as a result of Chapter 187 of 2001 which permits the board to sanction unlicensed individuals; and (5) the board’s and the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation’s efforts to make the board self-sustaining.

State Fiscal Effect: General fund revenues for the board will be maintained beyond fiscal 2004. The proposed 2003 budget assumes the board will realize \$19,430 in fees.

General fund expenditures will be maintained beyond fiscal 2004; however, the fiscal 2003 budget allowance of \$2,000, \$1,250 of which is designated for travel, will leave little to cover direct and indirect program costs. Like other boards, the State Board of Foresters has converted to staggered license renewal to minimize budget fluctuations, but with average annual total costs of approximately \$27,000 over the past four years, and minimal budget allowances, the board is not projected to become self-supporting.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 128 (The President) (Department of Legislative Services) – Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

Information Source(s): Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation; Department of Legislative Services

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