

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

**FISCAL NOTE**

House Bill 1209 (Delegate Pitkin)  
Commerce and Government Matters

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**Maryland Aviation Administration - General Aviation Airports - Standards and Guidelines**

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This bill directs the Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA) to study land use planning in areas surrounding general aviation airports, as well as related safety and land use compatibility issues, and develop standard and guidelines for land use in those areas. MAA must consider, in developing standards and guidelines: (1) the safety and compatibility of existing and future land uses surrounding general aviation airports; (2) safety for pilots and passengers in aircraft; and (3) the safety of residential areas in close proximity to the airports.

It also requires MAA to report to the General Assembly by October 1, 2003 on the standards and guidelines developed in compliance with the bill.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. The bill would not substantively change State activities or operations.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** In the establishment of airport zoning districts or the adoption or amendment of airport zoning regulations, MAA must consider several factors to promote the public health, safety, order, or security, such as:

- the character of the flying operations conducted or expected to be conducted at the airport;
- the surrounding terrain;
- the Federal Aviation Administration's opinion regarding the aerial approaches necessary for safe flying operations;
- the risks associated with aerial traffic at the airport;
- the size and layout of the landing area of the airport; and
- the present and future public transportation needs of the State.

For an airport to receive a license to operate, it must demonstrate that: (1) it meets minimum safety standards; (2) the site is adequate; (3) safe air traffic patterns have been worked out; and (4) environmental noise control requirements are met.

**Background:** The Office of Regional Aviation Assistance (RAA) oversees the operation of 140 general aviation airports (including heliports). A general aviation airport is defined as any airport other than scheduled commercial air carrier and/or military airports (e.g., Baltimore-Washington International and Hagerstown airports), and includes those that are publicly and privately owned. Of the 140 airports in Maryland, 136 are general aviation and 4 are commercial.

All airport owners must have an operating license or a registration certificate. Airports open to the general public must have a license and are required to establish higher safety standards. As part of the renewal for a license or a certificate, RAA inspects public and commercial use airports annually and private use airports biennially.

**State Fiscal Effect:** MAA advises that RAA considers land use and safety issues as part of its annual certification of airports. Any additional standards or guidelines would be taken into consideration during this process.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Transportation (Maryland Aviation Administration), Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 8, 2002  
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