

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2003 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 630 (Senator Astle)  
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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Environment - Task Force on Water Resource Management - Establishment

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This bill establishes a 23-member Task Force on Water Resource Management. The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), in consultation with other appropriate State agencies, must provide staff support. The task force must submit an interim report of its activities and recommendations by December 31, 2003. A final report is due by May 31, 2004.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2003 and sunsets May 31, 2004.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for MDE and other State agencies are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The task force is required to: (1) review specified information related to water resource management; (2) review the results of ongoing research regarding climate change and its regional impacts on aquifer depletion and recharging models; (3) review laws, regulations, and policies related to water resource management, development, conservation, and protection; (4) assess the adequacy of existing governmental resources, regulatory enforcement, and monitoring programs; (5) develop models to assess aquifer trends; (6) recommend additional actions, studies, policies, regulations, or laws that are

needed; and (7) provide a cost estimate and funding alternatives for implementation of each recommendation. The bill also states that it is the intent of the General Assembly that the task force consider the findings and recommendations of the Governor's Water Resource Management Advisory Committee and that the task force continue the work of that committee.

**Current Law:** MDE's Water Supply Program is responsible for implementing the federal Safe Drinking Water Act to ensure that communities are provided with safe water supplies that meet all drinking water standards and for managing the State's water supply resources to ensure that water supplies are not depleted through overuse.

**Background:** Governor Glendening established the Advisory Committee on the Management and Protection of the State's Water Resources in December 2002. Also known as the Water Resource Management Advisory Committee, it was established to advise and assist the Governor to ensure that water resources will be adequate, protected, and available. According to MDE, the committee has never met.

**State Expenditures:** MDE advises that costs would increase by \$51,239 in fiscal 2004 to hire two contractual employees to staff the task force. Legislative Services disagrees. First, even though the existing committee has never met, MDE has staff assigned to that committee. Second, the bill provides that MDE must provide staff support in consultation with other appropriate State agencies. If MDE's existing resources prove insufficient to staff the task force, presumably MDE could draw upon staff from the other State agencies represented on the task force.

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### Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** HB 659 (Delegate V. Clagett, *et al.*) – Environmental Matters.

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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 27, 2003  
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