

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2003 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 672
 Judiciary

(Delegate Conway, *et al.*)

Maryland Fire and Emergency Services Support Fund - Moving Violations - Surcharge

This bill requires the addition of a \$20 surcharge to any fine levied in a traffic case in which points may be assessed under the Maryland Vehicle Law. The bill also creates a special, nonlapsing Maryland Fire and Emergency Services Support Fund into which the Comptroller must annually pay the surcharges.

The surcharge applies only to moving violations committed on or after the bill's October 1, 2003 effective date.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Special fund revenues could increase by an estimated \$7.5 million in FY 2004 and general fund expenditures could increase by an estimated \$139,400. Future year revenues reflect annualization and 3% increases in the number of cases surcharged; expenditures reflect one-time contractual services.

(in dollars)	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
SF Revenue	\$7,500,000	\$10,300,000	\$10,609,000	\$10,927,300	\$11,255,100
GF Expenditure	139,400	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	\$7,360,600	\$10,300,000	\$10,609,000	\$10,927,300	\$11,255,100

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate effect

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The Maryland Fire and Emergency Services Fund must be used only for the low interest revolving loan account under the Volunteer Company Assistance Fund for the first year the fund is in operation or until \$20 million is used for this purpose, whichever comes first.

After the initial requirements for how the fund must be spent are met, the money in the fund may be used in the following ways: (1) one-sixth must be used for the Maryland Emergency Medical Service System Fund; (2) one-sixth must be used for the Traumatic Brain Injury Rehabilitation Fund; (3) one-third must be used for the Senator William H. Amoss Fire, Rescue, and Ambulance Fund; and (4) one-third must be used for the following trauma centers: (i) Johns Hopkins Hospital Adult Health System Trauma Centers; (ii) the Pediatric Trauma Center at the Children's National Medical Center; (iii) Prince George's Hospital Center; (iv) Sinai Hospital of Baltimore; (v) Suburban Hospital; (vi) Washington County Hospital; (vii) Peninsula Regional Medical Center; and (viii) Western Maryland Health System Memorial Hospital.

The bill also requires the Chief Judge of the District Court to modify the arrest-citation forms to include a line on which to add the \$20 assessment.

Current Law: From the low interest revolving loan account under the Volunteer Company Assistance Fund, the Board of Public Works may award a loan to a volunteer ambulance, fire, or rescue company within the State to assist with up to 75% of the cost of purchasing or refurbishing apparatus and upgrading or replacing facilities needed to store equipment.

The Maryland Emergency Medical Service System Fund is a continuing, nonlapsing fund that may be used only for the procurement of new helicopters and auxiliary helicopter equipment, ground support equipment, and other capital equipment related to the helicopters and for equipment and related improvements to the Emergency Medical Services' Communication System.

The Senator William H. Amoss Fire, Rescue, and Ambulance Fund promotes: (1) the delivery of effective and high quality fire protection, rescue, and ambulance services; (2) increased financial support for fire, rescue, and ambulance companies by local governments; and (3) the continued financial viability of volunteer fire, rescue, and ambulance companies.

The Traumatic Brain Injury Rehabilitation Fund does not exist under current law and this bill would not establish it.

Background: SB 181, which was introduced in the 2003 session, would create the Traumatic Brain Injury Rehabilitation Fund to assist individuals who have suffered “traumatic brain injuries” and their families in paying for services and products.

The Maryland Emergency Medical System Operations Fund was created by legislation in 1992. Chapter 269 of 1992 added an \$8 surcharge to motor vehicle registrations to create the fund, which is used to support the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems, the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute, the R. Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center, the Aviation Division-Maryland State Police, and the Amoss Fund (grants to local jurisdictions under the State Fire, Rescue, and Ambulance Fund). Chapter 33 of 2001 increased the motor vehicle registration fee from \$8 to \$11.

State Revenues: In fiscal 2004 the District Court is expected to handle approximately 1 million citations for moving violations for which points may be assessed. The number of convictions cannot be determined at this time. Assuming half the citations result in convictions, special fund revenues could increase by \$7.5 million in fiscal 2004, which reflects the bill’s October 1, 2003 effective date. Future year estimates reflect annualization and a growth rate of 3% per year in the number of moving violation convictions for which points may be assessed. This estimate assumes that for each case, the regular fine plus the \$20 surcharge will be assessed and paid. It should be noted, however, that funds going to the general fund could decrease, because when additional fees increase the total amount that a defendant must pay, a judge may reduce the fine to accommodate the increase and thereby deprive the general fund.

State Expenditures: General fund administrative expenditures could increase by an estimated \$139,410 in fiscal 2004 only for contractual services to: (1) redesign the court’s automated traffic system (\$16,250); (2) revise and redistribute the traffic citations to all law enforcement agencies (\$95,200); (3) modify the court’s Interactive Voice Response System (\$10,000); and (4) reprint the Motor Vehicle Administration’s advice of rights, order of suspension, and violation of alcohol restriction forms (\$17,960).

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: A similar bill, HB 1214, was introduced in the 2002 session. It was not reported by the House Judiciary Committee.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems, Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

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