

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2003 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 563

(Senator Middleton)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Environmental Matters

Natural Resources - Task Force to Study the Feasibility of Licensing Boaters -
Establishment

This bill establishes an eight-member Task Force to Study the Feasibility of Licensing Boaters in the State. The task force will study, among other items, the feasibility of licensing boaters, security issues involved in issuing a boating license, whether a boating license could be issued in conjunction with a driver's license, the benefits and costs associated with establishing a license, and methods of incorporating boater safety education into a licensing mechanism. Staff support will be provided by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The task force must issue a final report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 1, 2003.

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

Fiscal Summary

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

Local Effect: The bill would not materially affect local operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Federal law and the State Boat Act provide various requirements for vessels operating in the State, including registration and numbering requirements, boating safety education requirements, equipment requirements, operating procedures, and others.

Currently there is no requirement that boaters be licensed in the State. The Natural Resources Police enforces all natural resources laws of the State, including provisions of the State Boat Act on all waterways of the State.

Background: Several states, such as New Jersey, Connecticut, and Oregon, have implemented mandatory boater safety education and certification programs.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 442 (Delegate Owings, *et al.*) – Environmental Matters.

Information Source(s): Department of Natural Resources, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 13, 2003
mdf/jr

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