

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2003 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 566

(Delegate Schisler)

Environmental Matters

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Forest, Park, and Wildlife Rangers - Jurisdiction - Pilot Program

This bill establishes a two-year pilot program expanding the jurisdiction of forest, park, and wildlife rangers in Allegany, Frederick, Garrett, and Washington counties. The expanded jurisdiction includes all roadways traveled by a uniformed ranger in a marked vehicle during work hours when the ranger is traveling from one property owned by the State and managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to another, or to and from court on official business. By September 30, 2005, DNR must report to the Governor and the General Assembly on the implementation of the bill.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2003. The pilot program sunsets June 30, 2005. The provision that establishes the reporting requirement sunsets September 30, 2005.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any workload increase resulting from expanded jurisdiction could be handled with existing budgeted resources. Revenues would not be materially affected.

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

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Forest, park, and wildlife rangers have jurisdiction over: (1) properties owned by the State and managed by DNR; (2) railroad rights-of-way and utility properties which are not owned by the State but which traverse properties owned by the

State and managed by DNR; (3) all public and private properties which are within the boundaries of State properties managed by DNR; (4) all waters of the State within one mile of the shoreline of all properties owned by DNR; (5) all public and private property adjoining property owned by the State and managed by DNR; (6) all park property in Maryland owned by the federal government; (7) all roadways within the boundaries of or that portion of roadway adjoining properties owned by the State and managed by DNR; and (8) any property in Maryland for the purpose of executing a warrant that has resulted from law enforcement activities on property on which a forest, park, and wildlife ranger may exercise law enforcement powers.

Background: The Secretary of Natural Resources commissions forest, park, and wildlife rangers as the Secretary deems necessary for the enforcement of laws and regulations relating to forests and parks. According to DNR, there are currently 152 forest, park, and wildlife rangers.

Rangers are certified law enforcement officers. The expansion of their jurisdiction is sought for purposes of public safety.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: A similar bill was introduced as SB 603/HB 1140 in 2002. SB 603 received an unfavorable report by the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee. HB 1140 received an unfavorable report by the House Judiciary Committee.

Cross File: SB 247 (Senator Hafer, *et al.*) – Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

Information Source(s): Department of Natural Resources, Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 12, 2003
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