

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2003 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 348 (Senator Klausmeier)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Environment - Well Drilling Permits - Exemptions

This bill exempts specified persons from obtaining a well-drilling permit from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). Specifically, a permit is not required if the person drills a well to conduct temporary dewatering by use of well points, deep wells, or similar methods to install underground utilities or to install, construct, or reconstruct footings, pilings, abutments, or foundations in connection with heavy or highway construction.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. MDE has delegated the authority to issue well-drilling permits to local environmental health agencies.

Local Effect: Minimal decrease in local revenues from well-drilling permit fees – up to \$80 for each permit that would no longer be required. Local expenditures would not be materially affected.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: A person may not drill a well in Maryland unless the person obtains a permit. MDE has delegated the authority to issue well-drilling permits to local environmental health agencies. A county board of health may establish a permit fee to defray the cost of inspecting and testing wells. The fee may be charged before a permit is

issued but may not exceed \$80 per well or \$80 per cluster of wells. A county board of health may waive the fee under specified conditions.

Background: MDE advises that approximately 11,000 to 12,000 wells are drilled each year, with the majority drilled for single lot residential development. The number of wells drilled to conduct temporary dewatering for the purposes in the bill is unknown.

Local Revenues: Currently, local environmental health agencies may charge a fee of up to \$80 for a well-drilling permit. The number of persons who would no longer need a permit is unknown, although any resulting revenue decrease is not anticipated to be significant for any given local jurisdiction.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: A similar bill was introduced as SB 650/HB 788 in 2002. SB 650 received an unfavorable report from the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee. HB 788 passed the House and was referred to the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee. No further action was taken.

Cross File: HB 904 (Delegate Redmer) – Environmental Matters.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of the Environment, Kent County, Prince George's County, Washington County, Worcester County, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 26, 2003
mam/jr

Analysis by: Lesley Frymier

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510