

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2004 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 670 (Senator Colburn)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Dorchester County - Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area Protection Program - Piers

This bill exempts Dorchester County from the provision under the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area Law that prohibits private piers in a development area when a community pier with slips is provided as part of a new development project.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2004.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: The bill would not significantly affect Dorchester County finances.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Background/Current Law: Chapter 794 of 1984 established the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Protection Program in the Department of Natural Resources to foster more sensitive development activity in a consistent and uniform manner along shoreline areas of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Chapter 433 of 2002 expanded the program to include the Atlantic coastal bays and their tributaries. Each local jurisdiction has primary responsibility for developing and implementing a local program, subject to review and approval by the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area Commission.

Under the program, a new or expanded community pier or other noncommercial boat docking or storage facility may be permitted in the “buffer” under specified conditions. (A buffer is defined as an existing, naturally vegetated area or an area established in vegetation and managed to protect aquatic, wetlands, shoreline, and terrestrial environments from man-made disturbances.) One of those conditions is that, when a community pier with slips is provided as part of a new development project, private piers are not permitted in the development area. Current law allows new subdivisions with up to 15 lots to have one boat slip for each lot.

According to the commission, in 2003, there was only one subdivision approved in Dorchester County to which this bill would have applied. The commission advises that most new subdivisions in the county are small and have no need for a community pier.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 9, 2004
mh/ljm

Analysis by: Lesley Cook

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