

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2004 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 713 (Delegate Weir)  
Environmental Matters

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Natural Resources - Scenic and Wild Rivers Program

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This bill adds Back River to the list of rivers included in the Scenic and Wild Rivers Program administered by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The bill also modifies the definition of “scenic river” to mean a free-flowing river whose shoreline and related land are predominantly forested, agricultural, grassland, marshland, or swampland with a minimum of development for at least two *cumulative* miles of the river length.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** The bill’s changes could be handled with existing budgeted resources.

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

**Small Business Effect:** Unknown. Any impact would depend on the management plan developed as a result of the designation.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** The following rivers (and associated tributaries) are included in the Scenic and Wild Rivers Program: Anacostia, Deer Creek, Monocacy, Patuxent, Pocomoke, Potomac (in Montgomery and Frederick counties), Severn, Wicomico (in Charles County), and Youghiogheny. A “scenic river” is defined as a free-flowing river whose shoreline and related land are predominantly forested, agricultural, grassland, marshland, or swampland with a minimum of development for at least two miles of the river length.

The policy of the State is to preserve and protect the natural values of these rivers, enhance their water quality, and fulfill vital conservation purposes through wise use of resources within their surrounding environment. The Secretary of Natural Resources is directed to formulate and implement a program to carry out that policy for each designated river. The program must include the preparation of a management plan. Upon completion of the plan, the Secretary must submit the plan, with any appropriate recommendations, to the governing body of every county where the affected river is located for its approval and recommendations.

The Scenic and Wild Rivers Review Board, which reviews all inventories, studies, plans, rules, and regulations concerning the Scenic and Wild Rivers Program, must appoint, with the advice and consent of the appropriate local governing body, a local scenic and wild river advisory board for each designated river. A local board is directed to review inventories, studies, plans, and regulations and make recommendations to its local governing body and the Scenic and Wild Rivers Board regarding any proposed inventory, study, or plan. Upon completion of an approved management plan, the local governing body may establish a permanent scenic river advisory board for each designated river within its jurisdiction to make recommendations to the appropriate local governing body.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 19, 2004  
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