

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2004 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 1046

(Delegate Mandel, *et al.*)

Environmental Matters

Task Force on Automatic Sprinkler Systems in Homes

This bill creates a task force to study requiring the installation of automatic sprinkler systems in all newly constructed one- or two-family residential dwellings in the State. The task force must make specific recommendations, including developing draft legislation and regulations, on requiring the installation of sprinkler systems in all new one- or two-family dwellings in the State. The task force is to present a preliminary report to the House Economic Matters Committee and the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee by October 1, 2004 and a final report by December 1, 2004.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2004 and terminates December 31, 2004.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) are assumed to be absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Prince George's County has required automatic sprinkler systems in newly constructed one- and two-family dwelling since 1992. No fire related deaths have occurred in homes with automatic sprinkler systems.

Beginning January 1, 2004, all newly constructed residential homes in Montgomery County must include an approved sprinkler system. The county also provides a property tax credit for the installation of a nonmandated sprinkler system in all other residential buildings.

Residential automatic sprinkler systems are required in all newly constructed dormitories, apartment buildings, hotels, and town homes in the State.

Background: Approximately 80% of fatal fires occur in residential properties and on average, since 1975, 115 people die in fires each year in Maryland.

State Fiscal Effect: DLS advises that it will likely be able to handle staffing duties with existing resources, depending upon the number of other task forces or commissions that are established during the 2004 legislative session. The bill's December 1, 2004 report deadline could divert staff resources from other responsibilities.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 8, 2004
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