

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2005 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 503
Ways and Means

(Delegate Zirkin)

Local School Systems - Requirement to Purchase Calcium-Enriched Food and Beverages

This bill requires each local school system to purchase calcium-enriched food and beverages when it is purchasing food and beverages to be served to students at a public school or a school activity. Existing contracts and obligations may not be impaired by the bill.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The State does not procure food for public schools.

Local Effect: Local school expenditures for food services could increase due to the higher cost of calcium-enriched food and beverages. The costs could be passed on to students through higher meal prices. For every 1% increase in food costs, local school expenditures would increase by approximately \$0.9 million. **This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.**

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: School breakfasts and lunches supported by State and federal funds must meet specific minimal nutritional standards. Local boards of education are not required to purchase calcium-enriched food and beverages.

Background: The National Institutes for Health reports that, although many of the problems associated with getting too little calcium are not manifested until adulthood, the problems often start in childhood. Diseases that have been linked to calcium deficiency include osteoporosis, hypertension, obesity, and colon cancer. The Maryland State Department of Education advises that calcium is now being added to a variety of food in order to ensure sufficient intake.

Local Fiscal Effect: Local school expenditures for food programs would likely increase due to the requirement that calcium-enriched food and beverages be purchased by local school systems. In fiscal 2003, the most recent year for which data are available, local school systems spent a total of \$90.4 million on food. Thus, for every 1% increase in food costs, local school expenditures would increase by an estimated \$904,000. It is not known how much additional spending would be required to meet the requirements of the bill. Furthermore, it is likely that any significant cost increases would be at least partially offset by higher prices charged to students for school breakfasts and lunches.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Legislative Services

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ncs/hlb

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