

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2005 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 1086

(Delegate Weir, *et al.*)

Environmental Matters

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

The Maryland Hunting Heritage Protection Act

This bill requires the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to keep land managed by it open for hunting except under specified conditions. DNR also must manage land under its authority to support, promote, and enhance hunting opportunities to the extent authorized under State law, and manage land under its authority to prevent, to the greatest practical extent, any net loss of acreage available for hunting opportunities on land managed by DNR. The bill establishes a reporting requirement for DNR.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Potential increase in special fund expenditures to the extent the bill results in the opening of additional areas to hunting. No effect on revenues.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: Under its general authority, DNR may open or close lands under its management to public hunting or any other public use. Chapter 177 of 2002, which increased various hunting license fees, stated the intent of the General Assembly that DNR use special fund revenue generated as a result of that legislation, as appropriate, to open to public hunting at least half the total acreage that is leased for hunting to private individuals on the Chesapeake Forest Lands properties by the 2005 - 2006 hunting season.

Background: DNR manages over 400,000 acres of land. DNR advises that, in recent years, it has substantially increased the amount of lands that are open to public hunting.

State Expenditures: According to DNR, the bill's provisions regarding the management of lands essentially codify current practices and policies. DNR advises that it continues to review its land holdings to provide hunting opportunities whenever it is consistent with natural resource management, public safety, and logistical considerations. To the extent the bill results in the opening of additional areas to hunting that otherwise would not have been opened, however, special fund expenditures could increase. Any such increase cannot be reliably estimated at this time. DNR could handle the bill's reporting requirements with existing resources.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 1, 2005
mp/ljm Revised - House Third Reader - March 25, 2005

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