

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2006 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 730

(Washington County Delegation)

Environmental Matters

Education, Health, and Environmental
Affairs

Washington County - Fire Companies - Designation of Deputy Sheriff
Appointees

This bill increases, from 3 to 12, the number of fire company members that may be designated by the fire company's commanding officer to be appointed as deputy sheriffs in Washington County.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Authorizing additional fire company deputies would not materially impact Washington County finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The commanding officer of a fire company may designate three fire company members to be appointed as deputy sheriffs in a number of counties, including Washington County. In Washington County, a fire company member appointed as a deputy sheriff has the authority to perform the duties of deputy sheriffs while going to, functioning at, or returning from fires, accidents, floods, other emergencies, or other functions conducted by a fire company.

In Washington County, a fire company member appointed as a deputy sheriff is deemed an appointed official and must be treated as an appointed official for the purposes of statute relating to the State employees' and teachers' retirement and pension systems.

Background: There are 15 fire companies in Washington County, excluding the Hagerstown fire department. Washington County advises that the bill is necessary for increased responder safety on the roadways; and that fire companies appoint fire company deputies based on need and resources available. As such, the county advises that while it expects that most fire companies would increase the number of fire company deputies, few are expected to designate the maximum allowable number. According to the Washington County sheriff's office, the duties of the fire company deputies generally relate to traffic control.

State Fiscal Effect: Since the Washington County government does not participate in the State Retirement and Pension System, authorizing additional fire company deputies would not impact State finances.

Local Fiscal Effect: Fire company deputies in Washington County receive neither compensation nor equipment from the county. According to the county, efforts of the fire company deputies are funded by the Washington County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association (VFRA), any costs incurred above what is funded by VFRA are the responsibility of the respective fire company. In addition, there would be no additional cost in training additional fire company deputies.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Washington County, Maryland State Retirement Agency, Department of Legislative Services

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