

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2007 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 394

(St. Mary's County Delegation)

Environmental Matters

Education, Health, and Environmental
Affairs

**St. Mary's County - Review of County Plans - Water Supply Systems and
Designees**

This bill includes water supply systems under the administrative approval process applicable to new or expanded public sewerage systems in St. Mary's County. It also allows the St. Mary's County Commissioners (or designee) to approve an adoption, revision, or amendment to the county plan containing a new or expanded public sewerage or water supply system. The commissioners may only appoint a designee to consider an amendment to the county plan which contains a public sewerage or water supply system in growth areas shown on an adopted comprehensive land use plan. The bill also allows the planning commission to delegate the responsibility of holding a public hearing on the adoption, revision, or amendment of a county plan for the purposes of a new or expanded public sewerage or water supply system to county staff as directed by the commissioners.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: None. The bill's changes are procedural in nature and not anticipated to directly affect St. Mary's County finances.

Small Business Effect: Potential Meaningful.

Analysis

Current Law: Each county must have a county plan or a plan with adjoining counties, approved by the Maryland Department of the Environment, that deals with water supply

systems, sewerage systems, solid waste disposal systems, solid waste acceptance facilities, and the systematic collection and disposal of solid waste. A county governing body must conduct a public hearing before any adoption, revision, or amendment of its county plan. Any adoption, revision, or amendment also must be submitted to each official planning agency with jurisdiction in the county for review and comment. The county planning agency must certify that the adoption, revision, or amendment is consistent with the county comprehensive plan.

State law specifically provides that in St. Mary's County, the adoption, revision, or amendment of the county plan that contains a new or expanded public sewerage system must be reviewed by the St. Mary's County Planning Commission and approved by the county commissioners. The planning commission must hold a public hearing and consider and make specific findings of fact.

Background: The current approval process for new or expanded public sewerage systems in St. Mary's County involves two public hearings and can take about 16 to 18 months to complete. The bill's changes are expected to abbreviate the process for proposed additions or expansions in designated growth areas, only requiring one hearing that could be conducted by county staff, prior to approval by the county commissioners. The county advises that including water supply system additions or expansions under the administrative approval process for new or expanded public sewerage systems in the county would reflect current practice.

The St. Mary's County Planning Commission advises the county commissioners on plans for county development and resource use and supervises the county master plan, zoning ordinance, and subdivision regulations. The commission operates in accordance with State land use and other laws, the county zoning ordinance, and county subdivision regulations.

Small Business Effect: Small businesses in designated growth areas that would be affected by public sewerage or water supply system additions or expansions could benefit from the proposed, abbreviated approval process.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): St. Mary's County, Maryland Department of the Environment, Department of Legislative Services

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ncs/hlb

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