

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2008 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Revised**

House Bill 1085

(Washington County Delegation)

Environmental Matters

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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**Washington County - Regulation of Special Events**

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This bill authorizes the Washington County Commissioners to establish a “special event” permit and requires that an individual or organization obtain a permit before hosting a special event in the county.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None.

**Local Effect:** Potential minimal increase in Washington County revenues from special event permits issued. Expenditures would not be affected.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Bill Summary:** The Washington County Commissioners may, by ordinance, or resolution, adopt regulations concerning application requirements, permit processes, application fees, civil penalties, appeal procedures, and types of events to be excluded from the definition of a special event.

A special event is defined in Washington County as an “athletic event,” “entertainment event,” or an “event requiring assistance.” An entertainment event includes parades, bonanzas, carnivals, fairs, and concerts where the attendance, including participants and spectators, is expected to be greater than 250. An event requiring assistance includes any event requiring closure or rerouting of traffic on a roadway or intersection, or an event

that requires the assistance of county law enforcement, traffic control, emergency services, or other county staff which exceeds normal levels.

The bill specifies that certain events do not require a special event permit as long as they do not require additional assistance. These exceptions include • an event sponsored and held on property owned by the county board of education or a private parochial school; • an event held at a privately owned golf facility or other licensed recreational site during normal daily operations if the number of participants and spectators does not exceed the number of people that can be served by the facilities; • an event held inside a permanent fully enclosed structure designed primarily for the gathering of people; • an athletic event held on public property as part of the regular activity of an athletic or recreational sports league that has received permission to use public facilities from the county department of parks and recreation; and • an athletic event or entertainment event sponsored and directed in whole by the county commissioners.

**Current Law:** Washington County does not have a local law, ordinance, or regulation pertaining to special events.

**Background:** Events held in Washington County that require the assistance of county law enforcement, traffic control, emergency services, or other county staff are handled on a case-by-case basis. Generally, the county requires that organizers of events that are held for-profit contract for law enforcement, traffic control, and emergency services. Nonprofit organizations are not typically charged for county assistance.

**Local Fiscal Effect:** Washington County could see a minimal increase in revenues from the issuance of special event permits. The county would set the regulations providing for the permit fee and application procedures. The amount of permit revenues generated could not be estimated at this time, but are expected to be minimal.

Washington County advises that there is no standardized process for persons or organizations hosting a special event to notify the proper regulatory agencies. Requiring a special event permit would ensure that the appropriate agencies are given reasonable notice, which would allow for more efficient staff scheduling.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Washington County, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 10, 2008  
ncs/hlb Revised - House Third Reader - March 25, 2008

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