

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2009 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 935

(Delegate Bartlett, *et al.*)

Environmental Matters

Study to Evaluate Strategies to Reduce Deer-Vehicle Collisions

This bill requires the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the Department of State Police (DSP) to jointly conduct a study to evaluate strategies to reduce deer-vehicle collisions. Only department personnel and resources may be used for the study. A report with findings and recommendations is due to the General Assembly by October 1, 2010.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2009, and terminates October 31, 2010.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: DNR, MDOT, and DSP can absorb the shared responsibility for this reporting requirement with existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: No significant affect on local operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The study must include:

- a review of existing literature related to deer-vehicle collision reduction strategies;
- an evaluation of any patterns in the time and location of deer-vehicle collisions;

- an examination of the benefits and problems related to the use of fences and wildlife crossing structures;
- an examination of the use of wildlife warning reflectors and motorist warning devices;
- a review of other mitigation strategies that have been used to reduce deer-vehicle collisions; and
- a review of any other issues that affect the frequency of deer-vehicle collisions.

Current Law: A similar study is not required under State law.

Background: Maryland's diverse landscape provides excellent habitat for the white-tailed deer. As Maryland becomes more urbanized, it becomes increasingly difficult to manage deer populations through regulated hunting alone. While deer are valued and appreciated by large segments of society, high deer populations may be problematic.

In suburban environments, the high deer population has led to significant concern about motor vehicle collisions with deer. DNR advises 11,553 deer were reported killed by vehicles in the State (or about one deer killed for every 23 deer in the population) in 2006, and the total number of deer-vehicle collisions each year is between 20,000 and 30,000, with each collision resulting in an average of \$2,600 to \$2,800 in damage. In 2003, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety estimated more than 1.5 million deer-vehicle collisions occur in the United States each year, resulting in about 150 occupant deaths and more than \$1 billion in vehicle damage.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: The Environmental Matters Committee held a hearing on HB 1255 of 2008, a similar bill, but no further action was taken. HB 1075 of 2007, a similar bill, received an unfavorable report from the Environmental Matters Committee.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Department of Natural Resources, Department of State Police, Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 6, 2009
ncs/ljm

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