

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2009 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 765 (Senator Dyson)
 Budget and Taxation

Natural Resources Police - Minimum Staffing

This bill requires the Governor to include an appropriation in the Department of Natural Resource’s (DNR) annual proposed budget for not less than 480 Natural Resources Police (NRP) officer positions and requires the use of specified funds for these positions. The bill requires at least 480 NRP officer positions to be authorized even if funding for such positions is reduced by the General Assembly or the Board of Public Works.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2009.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General and special fund expenditures increase by \$32.8 million in FY 2010 to hire and equip 231 additional NRP officers. Future year estimates reflect annualization and inflation. Potential increase in general and federal fund revenues due to additional citations and expanded eligibility for federal grant funds. **This bill establishes a mandated appropriation beginning in FY 2011.**

(\$ in millions)	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
GF/FF Rev.	-	-	-	-	-
GF/SF Exp.	\$32.8	\$20.9	\$21.8	\$22.7	\$23.7
Net Effect	(\$32.8)	(\$20.9)	(\$21.8)	(\$22.7)	(\$23.7)

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate effect

Local Effect: To the extent local aid for law enforcement is redirected to DNR, local revenues decrease.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

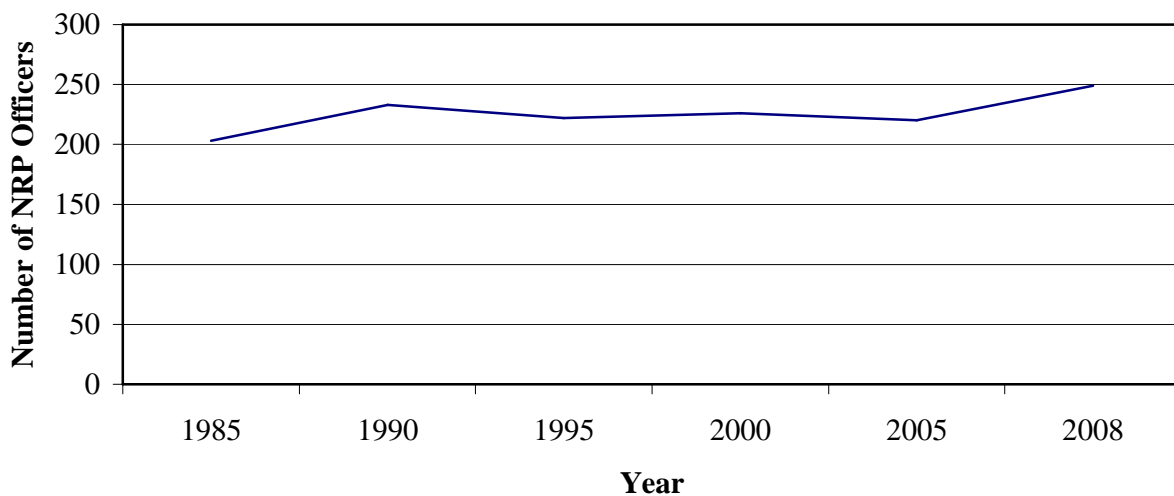
Analysis

Bill Summary: The bill requires the following funds to be used for NRP officer positions: funds generated by the Maryland Park Service equal to the cost of providing law enforcement and public safety on lands managed by DNR; DNR fisheries protection funds; Waterway Improvement Funds (WIF); State aid to counties and Baltimore City for law enforcement purposes that is based on the number of registered and documented boats in each county; and general funds.

Current Law/Background: NRP serves as a public safety agency with statewide authority to enforce all natural resources and conservation laws and regulations relating to seafood harvesting and sport fishing, boating, waterways pollution, wildlife conservation, and enforcement activities in State parks, forests, and other public lands. In addition, NRP is responsible for maritime and rural search and rescue and is the lead agency for maritime homeland security on State waterways. NRP also provides public education in the areas of hunting, boating, and water safety. Each NRP officer has full law enforcement powers statewide. The Governor's proposed fiscal 2010 budget for NRP authorizes 249 permanent NRP officer positions.

As illustrated in **Exhibit 1**, the number of sworn NRP officers has increased moderately over the past 20 years. The increase in positions after 2005 reflects the consolidation of existing State Forest and Park Service Rangers into NRP, not the addition of new officers.

Exhibit 1
Natural Resources Police Sworn Officers (1985 - 2008)



Source: Department of Natural Resources

State Fiscal Effect: General and special fund expenditures increase by at least \$32.8 million in fiscal 2010, reflecting a three-month start-up delay. This estimate does not reflect some additional benefits, such as a higher retirement benefit, unique to NRP officers. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring 231 additional NRP officers. It includes salaries, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, vehicles, vessels, equipment, and ongoing operating expenses.

	(\$ in Millions)
Positions	231
Salaries and Fringe Benefits	\$13.7
Vehicles and Vessels	10.3
Equipment	1.7
Operating Expenses	<u>7.1</u>
Total FY 2010 State Expenditures	\$32.8

Future year expenditures reflect full salaries with 4.4% annual increases, 3% employee turnover, and 1% annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

To the extent State park, fisheries, and WIF revenues are redirected to NRP, funding for park operations, fisheries programs, and waterway improvement projects may decrease. Also, with additional officers, DNR may be able to leverage increased federal funding. To the extent increased NRP staffing results in additional fees and fines from citations, general funds increase.

Additional Comments: While this estimate assumes 231 additional NRP officers are hired in fiscal 2010, DNR advises that practically speaking, it would be impossible to hire this many officers within a year. Also, DNR advises that a certain number of positions must remain vacant in order to maintain turnover expectancy.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Board of Public Works, Department of Budget and Management, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 17, 2009
ncs/ljm

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