

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2009 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 197

(Delegate G. Clagett, *et al.*)

Environmental Matters

Real Property - Installation and Use of Clotheslines on Residential Property

This bill prohibits local legislative bodies that exercise zoning powers under Article 66B – Land Use and persons in any contract, deed, lease, or other similar document from banning the installation or use of clotheslines on single-family residential property. “Single-family residential property” includes detached homes and townhouses, but does not include condominiums or cooperative housing corporations. Reasonable restrictions relating to aesthetic considerations and placement in the event of emergencies are permitted.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: If the Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General receives fewer than 50 complaints per year stemming from the bill, the additional workload can be handled with existing resources.

Local Effect: The bill does not directly affect local finances or operations.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: State law does not limit the authority of local governments or homeowner associations to limit by contract, deed, or other instrument, the installation or use of clotheslines.

Background: As shown in **Exhibit 1**, the U.S. Energy Information Administration estimates that U.S. households owned 61 million electric clothes dryers in 2001, which consumed 66 billion kWh and accounted for 5.8% of total national energy consumption.

Exhibit 1
Electricity Consumption by End Use in U.S. Households in 2001

	U.S. Households (in millions)	Total Energy Consumption (billion kWh)	Percent of Total U.S. Household Energy Consumption
Clothes Washers	84.1	10.1	0.9%
Clothes Dryers	61.1	65.9	5.8%

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration

A goal of the Governor's "EmPOWER Maryland" initiative is to reduce State energy consumption 15% by 2015. As part of this effort, the Maryland Energy Administration encourages Maryland residents to adopt cost-effective energy savings measures in their homes.

Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, and Utah have enacted various laws protecting the rights of homeowners to use clotheslines, and five other states are considering similar legislation.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; U.S. Energy Information Administration; *The Baltimore Sun*; *The Boston Globe*; Anne Arundel, Harford, Montgomery, Talbot, and Wicomico counties; Maryland Energy Administration; Secretary of State; Office of the Attorney General (Consumer Protection Division); Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 11, 2009
ncs/kdm

Analysis by: Jason F. Weintraub

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510