

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2010 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 224  
Economic Matters

(Delegate Morhaim, *et al.*)  
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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Plumbing - Greywater Recycling

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This bill specifies that a county may not adopt or enforce a provision of a local plumbing code that prohibits a greywater recycling system, as authorized under the State plumbing code. The bill defines “greywater” as used, untreated water generated by washing machines, showers, and bathtubs. The bill specifies that greywater does not include water from toilets, kitchen sinks, or dishwashers.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** None. The bill does not substantively change State activities or operations.

**Local Effect:** The bill does not materially affect local government finances.

**Small Business Effect:** Potential minimal.

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Analysis

**Current Law/Background:**

*Plumbing Regulation in Maryland*

The National Standard Plumbing Code (NSPC) is incorporated by reference as the State plumbing code and is updated every three to six years to reflect updated industry practices. The State Board of Plumbing uses the 2006 NSPC, with the 2007 supplement.

Counties are responsible for adopting and enforcing the State plumbing code or an equally stringent plumbing code. If the State Board of Plumbing determines that a

county is not adequately enforcing a plumbing code, the board enforces the plumbing code in that county.

The State plumbing code does not apply to Baltimore County and portions of Montgomery and Prince George's counties served by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission because the board does not have authority over these jurisdictions.

### *Greywater Recycling*

Traditionally, the municipal treatment facility has been the primary source of water disposal for single- and multifamily residential buildings and complexes. As long-term water shortages increasingly are predicted in areas across the nation, water conservation efforts have become more prominent. Various potentially useful and dependable water treatment and recycling technologies have been explored. One technique is greywater recycling, which is an on-site wastewater treatment and recycling system. Greywater systems are designed to safely manage wastewater and reduce water consumption.

NSPC defines greywater as water that has been used for washing dishes, laundering clothes, or bathing. Under that definition, essentially any water, other than toilet wastes, draining from a household is greywater. Although greywater may contain grease, food particles, hair, and any number of other impurities, it may still be suitable for reuse as nonpotable water. Reusing greywater serves two purposes: it reduces the amount of freshwater needed to supply a household, and reduces the amount of wastewater entering sewer or septic systems.

NSPC specifies how systems must be designed, installed, and maintained to prevent contamination of the potable water supply from nonpotable liquids, solids, or gases. NSPC approves greywater installation, materials, and treatment methods. In all buildings where dual water systems are installed, each system must be identified either by a color marking or metal tags. A sign indicating "unsafe water" must be posted on any outlets on the nonpotable water line that could be used for drinking or domestic purposes. Finally, NSPC outlines the cross-connection control techniques that must be followed to protect the potable water supply from backflow and back-siphonage.

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## **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Harford, and Montgomery counties; Maryland Department of the Environment; Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 1, 2010  
mlm/mcr

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Analysis by: Michael T. Vorgetts

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