

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2011 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 129 (Senator Glassman)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Task Force to Study the Development of Wetland Teaching Projects at Secondary Schools

This bill establishes a Task Force to Study the Development of Wetland Teaching Projects at Secondary Schools. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must provide staff support for the task force. A final report with findings and recommendations is due by December 31, 2011.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2011, and terminates June 30, 2012.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Given the State's fiscal difficulties, agency budgets have been constrained. Thus, the requirement to staff the task force and develop the report within six months may not be absorbable within the existing budgeted resources of MSDE without a redirection of resources from other projects. It is assumed that any expense reimbursements can be absorbed with existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The task force is charged with:

- studying State regulations governing the development of wetland projects at secondary schools designed to teach students about wastewater discharge, stormwater runoff, and other environmental issues; and
- making recommendations regarding steps the State can take to streamline the regulations studied by the task force.

Task force members may not receive compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations, as provided in the State budget.

Background: Wetlands projects at schools are a way to teach environmental education by exposing students to wildlife habitat, stormwater management, and sustainable green building practices. The projects give students the opportunity to put in practice the ideas learned in the classroom. Common activities include observing the life cycles of native wildlife, conducting water quality experiments, and monitoring stormwater runoff.

State Expenditures: MSDE anticipates that two regular full-time positions will be needed to implement this bill. However, the Department of Legislative Services advises that the added responsibilities resulting from this legislation are relatively minimal and are not permanent. Legislative Services believes the task force staffing requirement may be performed by temporarily redirecting resources from other projects.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 232 (Delegate Malone) - Ways and Means.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 10, 2011
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