

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2012 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 994

(Senator Brinkley)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Environmental Matters

Environment - Temporary Dewatering Devices and Well Drilling - Notification to Municipalities

This bill requires a well driller, in applying for a permit to drill a well, to notify a municipality if the well will be drilled within, or one mile or less from, the municipality's boundary. The bill also requires a person that has not been issued a permit to drill a well, but that installs a temporary dewatering device to facilitate the installation of underground utilities pursuant to a current well drilling permit exemption, to notify a municipality if the temporary dewatering device will be located within, or one mile or less from, the municipality's boundary.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not anticipated to materially affect State operations or finances.

Local Effect: The bill is not anticipated to materially affect local operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: A person may not drill a well to explore for, obtain, or monitor groundwater, to inject water into any underground formation from which groundwater may be produced, or to transfer heat to or from groundwater or the ground under specified circumstances, without a well drilling permit from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). A person who has not been issued a permit by MDE may install a temporary dewatering device to facilitate the installation of underground utilities

under specified conditions, after notifying the relevant county board of health. Notice to municipalities is not currently required.

Background: The goal of MDE's well construction regulatory program is to ensure that wells are constructed in a manner to protect groundwater quality and provide an adequate source of safe drinking water. While the majority of the State's population receives its water from public water systems, the use of groundwater for public water supplies is a common practice in Maryland. MDE delegates well drilling permitting activities to local approving authorities but provides oversight and assumes responsibility for updating well construction regulations when necessary. Roughly 10,000 well drilling permits are issued annually in Maryland.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Howard County, Baltimore City, Maryland Department of the Environment, Maryland Municipal League, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 9, 2012
ncs/lgc

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