

Department of Legislative Services
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FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 805

(Prince George's County Delegation)

Environmental Matters

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Prince George's County Board of Education - Recycling Program - School
Facilities
PG 403-12

This bill requires the Prince George's County Board of Education to develop and implement a recycling program for all facilities under its jurisdiction. By September 1, 2012, the board must submit to the Prince George's County legislative delegation a report regarding the recycling program.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2012.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Given that recycling occurs at several public schools and that reportedly there are plans to expand recycling within the county school system, Prince George's County school expenditures and revenues may be minimally affected. To the extent that the bill requires recycling at all facilities, county school expenditures may increase to support systemwide recycling. The Prince George's County Board of Education can meet reporting requirements with existing resources. **This bill may impose a mandate on a unit of local government.**

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: In developing the recycling program, the Prince George's County Board of Education must address:

- the recyclable materials to be separated;
- the strategy for collection, processing, marketing, and disposition of recyclable materials and polystyrene trays used in school cafeterias; and
- methods for promoting and determining compliance with the recycling program.

The report to the Prince George's County legislative delegation must include a copy of the recycling program, the status of the implementation of the recycling program, and the methods used to promote and determine compliance with the recycling program requirements.

Current Law/Background:

County Recycling Plans

In 1988, the Maryland Recycling Act required each county to submit a recycling plan. Jurisdictions with more than 150,000 residents were required to reduce their solid waste by 20%, and jurisdictions with less than 150,000 residents were required to reduce their solid waste by 15%. According to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), by 2000, every county had met or exceeded those requirements. Legislation enacted in 2000 established a voluntary statewide diversion goal of 40% by 2005.

Counties have flexibility to determine the best way to reach the required recycling rates. However, the county recycling plan, which is reviewed for revision on a triennial basis, must address specified issues such as the feasibility of composting mixed solid waste, methods for the separate collection and composting of yard waste, and methods of financing county recycling efforts, among others. Chapters 264 and 265 of 2009 added to this list a strategy for collecting, processing, marketing, and disposing of recyclable materials from county public schools. While Chapters 264 and 265 require counties to revise recycling plans to incorporate a recycling strategy for public schools, recycling at public schools is not required.

In 2010, MDE tentatively approved Prince George's County's incorporation of public schools into its triennial recycling plan that is due in 2012. The modification to the plan indicates the intention to implement recycling at all county public schools and indicates that while recyclables must include paper, other items may be added to the recycling program as markets become available. Prince George's County and MDE advise that while the modified plan assigns implementation responsibilities to the county school

system, the county school system may not be compelled to implement the public school recycling plan.

Recycling at Prince George's County Public Schools

Recycling does occur at numerous public schools in the county, generally at no cost or often with a net benefit to the schools involved due to the market value of recycled materials. The following describes just two programs that have operated for some time in the county.

Prince George's County advises that approximately 25 county public schools in the northern area of the county are presently served by Abitibi Paper Retrievers, which provides containers for, and picks up, mixed paper for recycling at no cost to the county school system, and also involves modest rebates to the school system. (Far more schools were served before the national economic downturn led to consolidation of the service.) Also, the Dream Machine program, which is co-sponsored by PepsiCo and Waste Management, now includes approximately 25 county public schools in a pilot program involving primarily the recycling of bottles and cans but also may include paper collections for schools not already served by Abitibi Paper Retrievers and where space permits. There is no cost to participating schools and schools may receive reward points for recycling to be used for purchase of school supplies.

Prince George's County Public Schools advises that it plans to support expansion of recycling efforts to several additional schools in the near future and does not anticipate that this will require a significant increase in funding. Many schools, especially high schools, will be allowed to be (or continue to be) largely self-directed in recycling program activities and decision making.

Local Fiscal Effect: The required plan developed by the Prince George's County Board of Education may or may not be more expansive than current county school system practices and plans regarding recycling, to the extent that a plan for all facilities may include planned (temporary or permanent) exclusion of some facilities based on cost and/or other feasibility considerations. Additionally, while the report to the Prince George's County legislative delegation must be submitted by September 1, 2012, the bill does not specify when implementation of the recycling program must begin. Therefore, Prince George's County school expenditures and revenues may be minimally affected.

Prince George's County Public Schools indicates that recycling at most public schools in the county comes at no cost, and in many cases generates additional revenue. However, the county school system anticipates that if the bill mandates recycling at every school,

expenditures at some Prince George's County elementary schools will exceed revenues generated from the market value of recycled materials.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 833 of 2010 and HB 1102 of 2011 were referred to the House Environmental Matters Committee, but no further action was taken on either bill.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Prince George's County, Department of Legislative Services

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Analysis by: Scott P. Gates

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