

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2012 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 37

(Senator Colburn)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Environmental Matters

Dorchester County - Water and Sewer Service - Late Fees

This bill authorizes the Dorchester County Sanitary District to charge an owner of a parcel serviced by or connected to a project that the district operates a late fee for any unpaid usage charge based on the use of the project by the parcel owner. The Dorchester County Sanitary Commission may require the payment of any late fees in addition to the currently authorized reconnection charge before water service is reconnected. A charge in default accrues interest from the date of default at a rate set by the sanitary commission.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: None. The bill codifies existing procedure.

Small Business Effect: Minimal or none.

Analysis

Current Law: A sanitary commission may impose on the owners of parcels serviced by a water system project a minimum charge and a usage charge that is based on the use of the project. If a water bill is unpaid for 30 days after being sent, after written notice is left on the premises or mailed to the last known address of the owner, the sanitary commission may disconnect water service to the property and require payment of the water bill plus a reconnection charge that is related to the cost of reconnection and established by ordinance of the relevant local government. If a bill for a minimum, usage, or reconnection charge is in default for 60 days, the charge is in default and becomes a lien on the property.

Exempt from these provisions relating to the establishment and governance of sanitary districts are Anne Arundel, Carroll, Harford, Montgomery, Prince George's, St. Mary's, and Wicomico counties.

Background: Chapter 354 of 2011 established a separate process for unpaid fees in Somerset County that authorizes the sanitary district to charge a late fee plus interest charges. This bill extends the same authorization to the Dorchester County Sanitary District. However, the Dorchester County Sanitary District advises that the bill merely codifies current procedures, as it already charges a late fee of \$5 per quarter and has no plans to change the fee or its procedures under the bill.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Dorchester County, Department of Legislative Services

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mlm/lgc

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