

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2013 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 641

(Montgomery County Delegation and Prince George's
County Delegation)

Environmental Matters

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission - Drinking Water - Testing
MC/PG 113-13

This bill requires the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) to conduct quarterly testing of drinking water for unregulated contaminants included in specified federal regulations. Within 30 days of receiving results that indicate the presence of a contaminant, WSSC must report the results to the county executives of Montgomery and Prince George's counties and publish the results on the WSSC website.

Fiscal Summary

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

Local Effect: WSSC expenditures increase by roughly \$25,000 in FY 2014, which reflects the bill's effective date and by about \$32,600 annually thereafter. Revenues are not affected. **This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.**

Small Business Effect: Minimal or none.

Analysis

Current Law: The federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) requires the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to issue a list of up to 30 unregulated contaminants to be monitored by public water systems. The list is required to be updated every five years. In May 2012, the most recent update of the list was finalized and contains 30 chemicals, metals, hormones, and viruses, as well as new monitoring and reporting requirements.

State drinking water quality regulations require water suppliers in Maryland to conduct monitoring of the federally listed contaminants in accordance with SDWA regulations. State regulations also require the owners or operators of specified water systems to send to the Maryland Department of the Environment a copy of monitoring results within 30 days of receipt. The owners must also notify persons served by the systems of the availability of the results in the first set of water bills issued after receipt of the results or through written notice within three months after receipt of the results.

Background: WSSC is among the largest water and wastewater utilities in the country, providing water and sewer services to 1.8 million residents in Montgomery and Prince George's counties. It has over 460,000 customer accounts, serves an area of around 1,000 square miles, and currently employs more than 1,500 people. The commission operates three reservoirs, two water filtration plants, and six wastewater treatment plants. The six wastewater treatment facilities, as well as the Blue Plains Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant, handle as much as 180 million gallons of wastewater per day. The commission maintains nearly 5,600 miles of water main lines and over 5,400 miles of sewer main lines.

Local Expenditures: WSSC advises that costs for contractual laboratory services increase by roughly \$25,000 in fiscal 2014 and by \$32,600 on an annual basis beginning in fiscal 2015. This estimate reflects additional water sample testing and monitoring costs for six types of analyses from drinking water systems, as well as costs to ship samples to contractual laboratories. WSSC advises that this does not reflect any personnel costs, as it assumes that the additional workload can be absorbed by existing personnel.

Additional Comments: The Department of Legislative Services advises that it is unclear if WSSC must report the presence of any "contaminant" or only unregulated contaminants listed in federal regulations.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of the Environment, Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 5, 2013
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