

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2014 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Revised**

House Bill 1258 (Delegates Pendergrass and Donoghue)  
Health and Government Operations Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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**Health Occupations - Maryland Environmental Health Specialists Act - Revisions**

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This bill requires the Board of Environmental Health Specialists in the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) to place a licensed environmental health specialist on inactive status for up to four years – subject to reactivation – under specified conditions. The bill also requires the board to place a licensed environmental health specialist on nonrenewed status if the licensee fails to renew his or her license for any reason, for up to four years – subject to reactivation – under specified conditions. The board must adopt regulations to establish a seasonal environmental health specialist-in-training program for individuals to be temporarily employed as environmental health specialists, with a condition that an individual may not participate in such a program for more than 6 months within a consecutive 12-month period.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** The bill does not materially affect special fund revenues for the Board of Environmental Health Specialists. The board can adopt the required regulations with existing budgeted resources. The Governor’s proposed FY 2015 budget for the board is \$101,200.

**Local Effect:** The bill does not materially affect operations of local health departments, although it may allow an additional month of temporary employment for seasonal employees who are in training.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

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## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The board must place a licensed environmental health specialist on inactive status for a period of up to four years if the licensee submits a written application for inactive status on a form approved by the board and pays to the board an inactive fee set by the board. If a licensed environmental health specialist fails to renew a license for any reason, the board must place the licensee on nonrenewed status for a period of up to four years.

The board must provide a licensee who is placed on inactive or nonrenewed status specified information relating to the duration of the inactive or nonrenewed status and the consequences of not reactivating or renewing the license. The board must reactivate the inactive or nonrenewed license if the licensee (1) applies for reactivation with the board before the inactive or nonrenewed status expires; (2) complies with specified license renewal requirements; (3) has completed the number of credit hours of continuing education set by the board; and (4) pays the reactivation processing fee set by the board.

The board must reactivate the license of an individual who was placed on inactive or nonrenewed status if the individual (1) applies to the board for reactivation *after* the inactive or nonrenewed status expires; (2) pays the reactivation fee and any other fees required by the board; (3) provides any documentation required by the board on the form the board requires; and (4) passes the examination, if any, that is required by the board in regulation.

**Current Law:** The board licenses environmental health specialists and certifies environmental health specialists-in-training, who typically have the required education but not the necessary experience for a license. Board regulations currently establish an environmental health specialist-in-training program, in which a “seasonal employee” may participate under a health specialist-in-training certificate.

A “seasonal employee” means an individual who (1) performs the duties of an environmental health specialist-in-training; (2) is employed for up to five consecutive months pursuant to an employment contract; and (3) is not required to complete the total months of experience in the training program as a full-time employee on a consecutive monthly basis.

To obtain an initial license as an environmental health specialist, an individual must first file an application for licensure with the board, accompanied by (1) an official transcript of the applicant’s baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate studies or other evidence certifying successful completion of course work considered equivalent by the board; (2) verification of the applicant’s relevant previous work experience, if any; and (3) the required application fee. Four possible combinations of education and training can lead to licensure.

**Background:** Chapter 667 of 2012 transferred the State Board of Environmental Sanitarians from the Maryland Department of the Environment to DHMH and changed the name of the board to the State Board of Environmental Health Specialists.

Environmental sanitarians perform inspections and investigations to secure compliance with environmental and health laws and regulations to ensure that people do not become sick because of their environments. Environmental sanitarians' comprehensive responsibilities include inspections, collection and analysis of data, risk assessment, nuisance complaint investigations, education, and emergency response. The diverse practice areas of the profession include food safety; air quality; disease investigation and prevention; animal, insect, and rodent control; and lead, well, septic system, swimming pool, and campground inspections. Most environmental sanitarians work for local health departments and State agencies.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Maryland Department of the Environment, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 28, 2014  
mc/ljm Revised - House Third Reader - March 25, 2014

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