

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2018 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 515

(Delegate Ghrist, *et al.*)

Environment and Transportation

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Agriculture – Palmer Amaranth – Study

This bill requires the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) to conduct a study to (1) assess the adverse financial impact of the invasive weed Palmer amaranth on the agricultural industry in the State and (2) determine the necessary actions each stakeholder must take to reduce the impact of Palmer amaranth and the cost of each action. In conducting the study, MDA must consult with representatives of the State Highway Administration, the Maryland Farm Bureau, soil conservation districts, the Maryland Association of Counties, the Maryland Grain Producers, and any other interested stakeholder, as determined by MDA. The department must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 1, 2018. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2018.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is expected to be implemented by MDA with existing resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: MDA has specified authority and responsibility under State law for efforts to control weeds and invasive plants in the State, including (1) working cooperatively with counties to control or eradicate plant species considered to be “noxious weeds” in the State and (2) regulation of “invasive plants” that have the potential to cause harm in the State, including prohibiting species that cause or are likely to cause severe harm in the State and

requiring notification to consumers purchasing plants species that cause or are likely to cause substantial negative impact in the State.

Background: MDA indicates that Palmer amaranth is causing serious issues for farmers and land managers in the State. According to a U.S. Department of Agriculture fact sheet, it has a rapid growth rate, growing two to three inches per day (up to eight feet tall), and is a prolific seed producer, producing 100,000 to 500,000 seeds per plant.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Agriculture; U.S. Department of Agriculture; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 12, 2018
nb/lgc Third Reader - March 16, 2018
Revised - Amendment(s) - March 16, 2018

Analysis by: Scott D. Kennedy

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