

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

House Bill 393

(Delegate Cassilly, *et al.*)

Environment and Transportation

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Natural Resources - Park Services Associates - Parking Citations

This bill authorizes a park services associate who is not commissioned as a law enforcement officer to issue a citation for a parking violation on (1) property owned by the State and managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR); (2) public and private property that is within the boundaries of State property managed by DNR; (3) public and private property that adjoins property owned by the State and managed by DNR; and (4) a roadway within the boundaries of, or that portion of a roadway that adjoins, property owned by the State and managed by DNR. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2019.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill is not expected to affect State finances. Based on information provided by DNR, and because the bill is authorizing only, it is not expected that DNR uses the authority provided by the bill, due in part to employee safety concerns.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The Secretary of Natural Resources is required to, within the limits of any appropriation made for such purpose, commission forest, park, and wildlife rangers, as necessary, for specified enforcement of laws and regulations. An employee who has been commissioned and assigned law enforcement duties has and may exercise the powers of a Natural Resources police officer or a law enforcement officer of the State on specified property, including State property managed by DNR.

Pursuant to provisions of the Maryland Vehicle Law, any State agency authorized by law and any political subdivision of the State may adopt ordinances or regulations that, among other things, regulate parking of vehicles and provide for the issuance of a citation by an officer for a violation of an adopted ordinance or regulation. "Officer" means a police officer or a person other than a police officer who is authorized to issue a citation for a violation of an adopted ordinance or regulation.

Background: DNR undertook an effort in 2005 to consolidate the law enforcement functions of the Maryland Park Service (MPS) and the Natural Resources Police (NRP), shifting all law enforcement responsibility to NRP. A total of 91 MPS law enforcement officers were transferred to NRP, and currently only 3 remain with MPS.

MPS rangers are now classified as “park services associates” under Department of Budget and Management (DBM) personnel classifications, and their job specifications do not include law enforcement authority or duties. “Ranger” is a working title approved by DBM for the park services associates.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 24 of 2017, a similar bill, received an unfavorable report from the House Environment and Transportation Committee.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Natural Resources; Department of State Police; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

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