

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Enrolled - Revised

Senate Bill 467

(Senator King)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Environment and Transportation

Forestry - Mel Noland Fellowship Program - Establishment

This bill establishes the Mel Noland Fellowship Program within the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to support students seeking careers in fields relating to natural resources. The Mel Noland Woodlands Incentive Fund is renamed and its uses are expanded to include funding the fellowship program. Beginning in fiscal 2021, the Governor must appropriate \$50,000 annually to the fund and DNR must direct \$50,000 annually from the fund to the fellowship program. Each year, DNR and a managing organization must select two fellows and support the students in their matriculation in a natural resources field at an institution of higher education. Each fellow must receive an annual stipend of \$20,000 from the fund. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2019.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$50,000 annually beginning in FY 2021 due to the bill’s mandated appropriation to the fund for the fellowship program. Special fund revenues and expenditures increase correspondingly. **This bill establishes a mandated appropriation beginning in FY 2021.**

(in dollars)	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
SF Revenue	\$0	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
GF Expenditure	\$0	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
SF Expenditure	\$0	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
Net Effect	\$0	(\$50,000)	(\$50,000)	(\$50,000)	(\$50,000)

Note: () = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The Mel Noland Woodland Incentives Fund is renamed the Mel Noland Woodlands Incentives and Fellowship Fund, and its uses are expanded to include funding the fellowship program established by the bill. For fiscal 2021 and each subsequent fiscal year, (1) the Governor must appropriate \$50,000 to the fund and (2) DNR must direct \$50,000 from the fund to the program to pay stipends to the fellows and to offset related administrative costs.

DNR must develop criteria for selecting fellows and managing organizations. DNR must select a managing organization with which the department must coordinate to administer the fellowship program. Together, DNR and the managing organization must select two fellows each year and support them in their matriculation in a natural resources field at an institution of higher education.

One fellow must be seeking a degree to work in the field of natural resources management, and one must be seeking a degree to work in the field of urban and community forestry. DNR or the managing organization may require a fellow to complete tasks related to the fellowship program in addition to the fellow's course of study. A fellow must receive an annual stipend of \$20,000 paid from the fund.

Any funds remaining after stipends are distributed must be used for the administration of the program, including recruitment, selection, and supervision of the fellows by DNR and the managing organization.

Current Law/Background: The Mel Noland Woodlands Incentive Fund was created to help fund a variety of forest-related programs. Among other things, fund revenues must be used to (1) provide cost-share assistance to private forest land owners for tree planting, site preparation, and timber stand improvement; (2) provide annual grants to forest conservancy district boards; (3) establish a forest health emergency contingency program; and (4) provide financial assistance for the administration of an urban and community forestry program.

Fund revenue sources include up to \$200,000 annually in agricultural land transfer tax revenue from land that is entirely woodland; DNR charges imposed for assisting with implementation of approved practices; money distributed from the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays 2010 Trust Fund; and, subject to specified approval, revenues derived from forestry practices on specified DNR lands.

Melvin L. Noland planted thousands of trees throughout the State that improved natural habitat, beautified communities, and provided a living classroom for students. Mr. Noland served on the Maryland Forest Association's Board of Governors, the Baltimore County

Forestry Council, and the Maryland Association of Forest Conservancy District Boards. Mr. Noland received many awards for his dedication to environmental education and the Chesapeake Bay, including the Chesapeake Bay Trust's 2003 Ellen Fraitess Wagner Award. Mr. Noland passed away in August 2010.

State Fiscal Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$50,000 annually beginning in fiscal 2021 due to the bill's mandated appropriation to the Mel Noland Woodland Incentives and Fellowship Fund for the fellowship program. Special fund revenues and expenditures increase correspondingly, reflecting receipt of the general funds by the fund and expenditures from the fund for stipends to the two fellows (a total of \$40,000 annually) and administrative costs (\$10,000 annually). This analysis assumes that (1) \$10,000 is sufficient to offset the administrative costs to recruit, select, and supervise the fellows and (2) existing staff implement the bill.

DNR advises that, based on experience with another fellowship program it administers, the two fellows are considered contractual employees and entitled to health care and other contractual benefits. However, the Department of Legislative Services advises that it is unclear whether the fellows are considered contractual employees of DNR, contractual employees of the managing organization, or are in another category of employment. Thus, this estimate does not include any health insurance costs that could be incurred for specified contractual employees, under the State's implementation of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, or other fringe benefits.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 488 (Delegate McIntosh) - Environment and Transportation.

Information Source(s): Department of Natural Resources; Department of Budget and Management; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History:
mm/lgc

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Analysis by: Kathleen P. Kennedy

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