

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 931 (Delegate Hutchinson)
Environment and Transportation

Environment – Tidal Wetlands – Construction of Piers

This bill prohibits the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), in making a decision on an application for a tidal wetlands license or permit to construct a pier, from considering any vessel owned by the applicant as a condition for issuing the license or permit.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: MDE can implement the bill using existing budgeted resources. State revenues are not anticipated to be materially affected.

Local Effect: The bill is not anticipated to materially affect local government finances.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: Wetlands in the State are protected, and the Wetlands and Waterways Program within MDE administers a statewide program for the management, conservation, and protection of Maryland’s tidal wetlands and nontidal wetlands and waterways. Pursuant to statute and MDE regulations, and subject to certain exceptions, a person may not dredge, fill, or construct or reconstruct structures in:

- State wetlands, without a license issued by the Board of Public Works (or MDE, as MDE is delegated authority to authorize certain activities in State wetlands); or
- private wetlands, without a permit issued by MDE.

Application fees for wetlands and waterways permits and licenses are set in statute and range from \$250 (for certain shoreline stabilization projects) to \$7,500 multiplied by the impact area in acres (for major projects with an impact of one acre or more). The application fee for minor projects is \$750.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: SB 1049 (Senator Mautz) - Education, Energy, and the Environment.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of the Environment; Board of Public Works; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 16, 2024
km/lgc

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