

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1135 (Delegates Rosenberg and Ruff)
Environment and Transportation

Environment - Maryland Clean Water Fund - Authorized Uses

This bill expands the authorized uses of the Maryland Clean Water Fund to include activities related to urban forest management.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Overall finances of the Maryland Clean Water Fund are not affected; the bill merely expands the authorized uses of the fund. The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) can implement the bill's changes with existing staff. The extent to which any other State agencies, such as the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), might receive funding for urban forest management activities under the bill is unclear.

Local Effect: To the extent funding is provided from the Maryland Clean Water Fund for urban forest management activities, any local governments that receive such funding benefit. Other local governments may be negatively affected to the extent they receive less funding for the other (existing) authorized uses of the fund.

Small Business Effect: Minimal. To the extent funding is provided from the Maryland Clean Water Fund for urban forest management activities, small businesses that work in the urban forestry sector may benefit.

Analysis

Current Law:

Maryland Clean Water Fund

The Maryland Clean Water Fund consists of all application fees, permit fees, renewal fees, funds, and civil and administrative penalties collected under specified water pollution

control laws and specified provisions related to the regulation of sealant products. MDE must use the Maryland Clean Water Fund for activities that are related to:

- the identification, monitoring, and regulation of the proper discharge of effluent into State waters, including program development of these activities as provided by the State budget;
- the management, conservation, protection, and preservation of the State's groundwater and surface water, including program development of these activities as provided by the State budget;
- correcting to the extent possible the failure to implement or maintain erosion and sediment controls;
- administration of the sediment control program;
- emergency removal of sewage sludge or mitigation of the effect of any utilization of sewage sludge that MDE finds (1) endangers public health, safety, or welfare or (2) endangers or damages natural resources;
- the inspection, monitoring, or enforcement of sewage sludge utilization, including program development (for activities conducted by MDE, a local health official, or the local health official's designee);
- identifying, monitoring, or regulating the utilization of sewage sludge, including program development;
- the regulation of sealant products (for activities conducted by MDE); and
- providing supplemental inspections and monitoring of sewage sludge utilization sites by (1) contracting with a county on request of that county to provide supplemental inspections and monitoring and (2) limiting the value of services provided under the contract to no more than 45% of the generator fees for sludge utilized in that county that is generated outside of that county or service area.

In determining the use of money from the fund, priority must be given to activities relating to the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

Existing Programs and Policies Related to Urban Forest Management

Several programs in the State provide funding and other resources for activities related to urban forest management. For example, the Maryland Urban and Community Forestry Committee Grants Program helps community groups fund tree planting and education projects statewide to enhance Maryland's urban forest. The Maryland Forest Service within DNR administers Tree-Mendous Maryland, aimed at helping citizens restore tree cover on public land and community open space. In addition, the Chesapeake Bay Trust administers the Urban Trees Grant Program, which provides grants to, among other entities, nonprofit organizations, schools, community associations, institutions of higher education, and local governments for tree planting projects in urban, underserved communities as part of an

effort to help the State achieve its statutory goal of planting and helping to maintain 5.0 million trees by the end of calendar 2031.

Effective July 1, 2026, it is the policy of the State to encourage the retention and sustainable management of forest lands by increasing, as measured every four years, the acreage of (1) forest land in the State and (2) land in the State covered by tree canopy, for land located inside an urban area and outside an urban area.

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of the Environment; Department of Natural Resources; Chesapeake Bay Trust; Department of Legislative Services

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rh/lgc

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