

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 978 (Senator Lam)
 Education, Energy, and the Environment

Environmental Permits - Requirements for Public Participation and Impact and Burden Analyses (Cumulative Harms to Environmental Restoration for Improving Shared Health - CHERISH Our Communities Act)

This bill establishes several new permit application requirements for a broad spectrum of permits for “covered projects” issued by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). Among other things, the bill requires a permit applicant for a covered project to submit an environmental impact analysis, and, under specified circumstances, an existing burden report with their permit application. In general, MDE may not approve a permit application if it determines that the proposed project would cause or contribute to an increased potential for adverse environmental and public health impacts within a specified surrounding area. However, MDE may grant a conditional permit, subject to specified requirements for mitigation by the applicant. The bill also expands the applicability of existing public participation requirements to projects identified as having an increased potential for adverse community environmental and public health impacts.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures for MDE and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) increase by a total of \$2.0 million in FY 2026. Special fund expenditures for the Public Service Commission (PSC) increase by \$93,000 in FY 2026; special fund revenues increase correspondingly. General/special fund expenditures for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) increase by \$203,500 in FY 2026. Out-years reflect annualization, inflation, and ongoing costs. State expenditures (multiple funds) also increase (not reflected in the table below). Other effects are discussed below.

(in dollars)	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030
SF Revenue	\$93,000	\$111,400	\$116,300	\$121,300	\$126,400
GF Expenditure	\$2,013,600	\$2,272,400	\$2,372,700	\$2,477,900	\$2,459,500
SF Expenditure	\$93,000	\$111,400	\$116,300	\$121,300	\$126,400
GF/SF Exp.	\$203,500	\$212,400	\$216,700	\$221,100	\$225,500
Net Effect	(\$2,217,100)	(\$2,484,800)	(\$2,589,400)	(\$2,699,000)	(\$2,684,900)

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

Local Effect: Local government finances and operations are likely significantly affected, as discussed below. **This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.**

Small Business Effect: Meaningful.

Analysis

Bill Summary:

Covered Projects and the Identification of Projects as Having an Increased Potential for Adverse Community Environmental and Public Health Impacts

Under new § 1-703 of the Environment Article, the bill establishes a list of 22 types of activities and facilities that are each deemed to be a “covered project” and therefore, must be identified by MDE as having an increased potential for adverse community environmental and public health impacts if the project requires any of the following permits: (1) air quality control permits to construct; (2) National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permits; (3) permits to own, operate, or maintain a hazardous material facility; (4) permits to own, operate, or maintain a low-level nuclear waste facility; (5) potable reuse permits; (6) refuse disposal permits; (7) sewage sludge permits; (8) State-only conditions associated with Title V (Part 70) permits to operate; or (9) State permits to operate minor air pollution sources that MDE has identified as needing permits to operate.

“Covered project” means an activity or a facility type that is any (1) aggregate mining operation; (2) anaerobic digester; (3) carbon dioxide pipeline; (4) coal mine (active or inactive); (5) concentrated animal feeding operation; (6) concrete bathing facility; (7) energy-generating facility (excluding solar, wind, and geothermal facilities); (8) energy storage site (including data centers and hydrogen hubs); (9) fossil fuel shipment, handling, or processing facility (including bulk shipping terminals and any component of a facility that processes or stores, or both, liquified natural gas); (10) incinerator, including incinerators for medical waste, municipal solid waste, animal waste, or woody biomass; (11) landfill, including landfills that accept ash, construction or demolition debris, or solid waste; (12) manufacturing facility, including chemical manufacturing; (13) materials recovery facility; (14) military testing and research site; (15) pellet factory; (16) refinery; (17) sawmill; (18) scrap metal yard; (19) sewage treatment plant with a capacity of more than 50.0 million gallons per day; (20) sludge processing facility; (21) solid waste transfer station; and (22) superfund site.

Expanded Scope of Title 1, Subtitle 6 of the Environment Article and a New Environmental Impact Analysis Required

The bill expands the scope of Title 1, Subtitle 6 of the Environment Article (which establishes general public participation requirements for a number of permits issued by MDE) to include permits for projects identified under new § 1-703 of the Environment Article as having an increased potential for adverse community environmental and public health impacts.

The bill also establishes new requirements under Title 1, Subtitle 6 of the Environment Article for covered projects that have been identified as having an increased potential for adverse community environmental and public health impacts. Specifically, a person applying for a new, renewal, or expansion permit for such a project must include in the permit application an environmental impact analysis that includes (1) a description of the proposed permit and the environmental conditions of the site; (2) the environmental and public health impacts of the proposed permit, detailing both short- and long-term effects; (3) any alternatives to the proposed permit; (4) any irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources involved in the proposed permit; (5) proposed mitigation measures to minimize identified environmental impacts; and (6) if applicable, a proposed existing burden report (discussed below).

The bill also modifies existing notification requirements under Title 1, Subtitle 6 of the Environment Article with respect to a permit application for a project identified as having an increased potential for adverse community environmental and public health impacts. For such permits, whenever MDE is required to publish notice of the permit application in accordance with existing public notice requirements, the notice must include the environmental impact analysis, including, if applicable, the proposed existing burden report.

Existing Burden Report Required

A permit application for a covered project that has been identified as having an increased potential for adverse community environmental and public health impacts that is located within a 1.5-mile radius from the boundary of an “at-risk census tract” must include a proposed existing burden report. “At-risk census tract” means a census tract for which the final Environmental Justice (EJ) score as determined by the Maryland EJ tool is at or above the 75th percentile (EJ scores and the Maryland EJ tool are discussed further in the Current Law section).

A proposed existing burden report must include (1) the EJ Score from the Maryland EJ tool for the census tract where the applicant is seeking a permit; (2) a comprehensive list of each existing pollution source (or category of sources) that is impacting the community, as

specified; (3) ambient concentrations of regulated air pollutants and regulated or unregulated hazardous air pollutants; (4) traffic volume and general noise and odor levels; (5) exposure or potential exposure to lead (including lead-based paint) or contaminated drinking water supplies; (6) proximity of the covered project to existing sources of pollution, as specified; (7) the potential or projected contribution of the covered project to existing pollution burdens in the community, and accounting for the existing burden, the potential health effects of any contribution; (8) an evaluation of existing environmental and public health stressors borne by the community; and (9) an evaluation of any unavoidable environmental and public health stressors posed by the covered project.

Before approving a covered project located within a 1.5- mile radius from the boundary of an at-risk census tract, MDE, or other permitting agency, must prepare, or cause to be prepared, a final existing burden report. An existing burden report may only be finalized if:

- the report has been reviewed for accuracy and sufficiency by the Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities (CEJSC), MDE, MDH, elected officials representing the impacted community, and any other environmental or public health official that the permitting agency deems appropriate;
- there has been an opportunity for public comment on the existing burden report in accordance with Title 1, Subtitle 6 of the Environment Article; and
- a record of all public comment on the proposed existing burden report and permit application has been incorporated into the final existing burden report.

A final existing burden report may be based all or in part on the proposed existing burden report.

Approval, Denial, and Conditional Approvals of Covered Permit Applications

For affected covered projects, after it reviews the final existing burden report, the environmental impact analysis, and any accompanying public comments, MDE must make an official determination as to whether the reports and public comments indicate that the covered project may, directly or indirectly, cause or contribute to an increased potential for adverse community environmental and public health impacts within an at-risk census tract.

If MDE determines that a project would cause or contribute to an increased potential for adverse community environmental and public health impacts within an at-risk census tract, MDE must, in general, deny the permit. However, MDE may approve a conditional new, expansion, or renewal permit if (1) the permit applicant can establish that the purpose for the permit would serve an essential environmental, health, or safety need of the community and (2) there is no reasonable alternative.

If MDE conditionally approves an application for a new, expansion, or renewal permit for a covered project, it must (1) impose additional permit conditions to protect public health and (2) require the applicant to enter into a cumulative impacts mitigation fund agreement in accordance with specified requirements (discussed below).

Cumulative Impacts Mitigation Fund Agreements

A cumulative impacts mitigation fund agreement must be entered into with a community-based organization (or collection of community-based organizations) representing the community or communities affected by the covered project. The agreement must establish ongoing payment of fees by the permit holder into a project-specific cumulative impacts mitigation fund for the life of the project.

A cumulative impacts mitigation fund agreement must (1) be enforceable in a State court and include that information in the language of the contract; (2) benefit all residents who live within the at-risk census tract affected by the covered project; and (3) not restrict the right of residents or organizations to express concerns about or raise objections to the covered project.

Additional Notice Requirements

MDE must make information about any enforcement action against a permitted facility that is located within a 1.5 mile-radius of the boundary of an at-risk census tract readily available online, as specified. At least 25% of the revenue from any such enforcement action must be distributed to a special fund to be used to assist affected communities. MDE must adopt regulations for the operation of the special fund and appropriate distribution of the funds to community organizations within affected communities.

Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity

For any Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) that is issued in lieu of an air quality permit to construct that is subject to the requirement to prepare an existing burden report under the bill, the Secretary of the Environment must include in its recommendation regarding the CPCN application (that it prepares pursuant to current law) the final EJ Score from the Maryland EJ tool, the findings of the existing burden report, and measures to meet the bill's requirement for entering into a cumulative impacts mitigation fund agreement.

Current Law:

Scope of Title 1, Subtitle 6 of the Environment Article

Title 1, Subtitle 6 of the Environment Article establishes the general public participation requirements for a number of permits issued by MDE. More specifically, the subtitle establishes the general public notice and hearing requirements for (1) air quality control permits to construct; (2) permits to own, operate, establish, or maintain a controlled hazardous substance facility; (3) permits to own, operate, or maintain a hazardous material facility; (4) permits to own, operate, establish, or maintain a low-level nuclear waste facility; (5) permits to install, materially alter, or materially extend landfill systems, incinerators for public use, or rubble landfills; (6) permits to discharge pollutants to waters of the State; (7) permits to install, materially alter, or materially extend a structure used for storage or distribution of any type of sewage sludge issued, renewed, or amended; and (8) potable water reuse permits.

Notice and Hearing Requirements under Title 1, Subtitle 6 of the Environment Article

Pursuant to § 1-603 of the Environment Article, MDE must cause to be published notice of applications for the permits specified above, and MDE must assure that permit applications are available to the public for inspection and copying. On written request made within 10 working days after publication of a notice of application, or in its own discretion, MDE must provide an opportunity for an informational meeting with respect to the application. The informational meeting may be canceled if all persons who made the requests withdraw those requests prior to the meeting. Unless the notice of application contained a notice of the informational meeting, MDE must publish notice of the informational meeting. MDE may require the applicant to attend an informational meeting or public hearing and present information concerning the application. If the applicant fails to appear, the application may be denied.

Pursuant to § 1-601 of the Environment Article, when MDE is required to hold a public informational meeting or public hearing under Subtitle 6, MDE may hold such a meeting or hearing using teleconference or Internet-based conferencing technology unless (1) a federal statute or regulation requires an in-person meeting/hearing or (2) any person makes a timely request that the meeting/hearing be held in person. If MDE holds an in-person meeting/hearing, MDE must hold the meeting or hearing at a location in the political subdivision and in close proximity to the location where the individual permit applies. MDE is not required to hold an in-person meeting or hearing under specified emergencies.

When more than one public informational meeting or hearing is required, MDE may consolidate some or all of the meetings or hearings for the proposed facility with similar meetings or hearings.

Pursuant to § 1-602 of the Environment Article, when MDE is required to publish notice pursuant to Subtitle 6, the notice must (1) be published at least once a week for two consecutive weeks in a daily or weekly newspaper of general circulation in the geographical area in which the proposed facility is located and (2) include specified items relating to the EJ Score for the census tract where the applicant is seeking a permit. MDE may (1) require notice of an informational meeting or a public hearing by mail to each person requesting the meeting or hearing or to their authorized representatives and (2) provide additional notice by requiring the notice to be posted at the proposed facility or at public facilities in the geographical area of the proposed facility. The applicant must bear all costs incurred by MDE in providing notice, and MDE may require the applicant to publish and send the required notices.

In addition, when MDE is required to publish notice of a permit application, MDE must (1) electronically post the notice on its website and (2) provide a method for interested parties to electronically request any additional notices related to the permit application. The notice must include specified items, including the EJ Score for the census tract where the applicant is seeking a permit and the EJ score review conducted by MDE.

Environmental Justice Screening

A person who is applying for a permit listed under § 1-601(a) of the Environment Article must include, as part of the permit application, the EJ Score from the Maryland EJ tool for the census tract where the applicant is seeking a permit, unless the permit requires the applicant to use a tool developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. On receiving such an application, MDE must review the EJ Score for the census tract where the applicant is seeking a permit using the Maryland EJ tool to verify the applicant's information.

“EJ Score” means an overall evaluation of an area's environment and existing environmental justice indicators, as defined by MDE in regulation, including pollution burden exposure, pollution burden environmental effects, sensitive populations, and socioeconomic factors. “Maryland EJ tool” means a publicly available State mapping tool that allows users to (1) explore layers of environmental justice concern; (2) determine an overall EJ Score for census tracts in the State; and (3) view additional context layers relevant to an area.

Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities

CEJSC was established in 2001 by Executive Order and codified in statute in 2003. The commission has several statutory duties, including, among other things, (1) advising State government agencies on environmental justice and related community issues; (2) analyzing the impact of current State and local laws, permits, actions, and policies on the issue of

environmental justice and sustainable communities; (3) assessing the adequacy of State and local laws to address the issue of environmental justice and sustainable communities; and (4) recommending options to the Governor and the General Assembly for addressing issues, concerns, or problems related to environmental justice, as specified.

“Environmental justice” means equal protection from environmental and public health hazards for all people regardless of race, income, culture, and social status.

Tentative and Final Determinations on Permit Applications

After MDE receives a permit application, MDE must prepare a tentative determination, which must include (1) a proposal to issue or not issue a permit; (2) any proposed permit limitations or conditions; (3) a brief explanation of MDE’s tentative determination; and (4) any proposed schedule of compliance. MDE must publish notice of the tentative determination as specified, and MDE must schedule a public hearing on the tentative determination under specified conditions.

MDE must prepare a final determination on a permit application if (1) written comments adverse to the tentative determination were received by MDE within a specified time period after the publication of the notice of tentative determination; (2) comments adverse to the tentative determination were received at or after the public hearing, as specified; or (3) the final determination is substantively different from the tentative determination and all persons aggrieved by the final determination have not waived, in writing, their right to request a contested case hearing. If MDE is required to prepare a final determination under these provisions, MDE must publish a notice of the final determination. If MDE is not required to prepare a final determination, the tentative determination is a final decision by MDE.

Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity Process

PSC is the lead agency for licensing the siting, construction, and operation of power plants and related facilities in the State through the CPCN process, which is a comprehensive process involving several other State agencies, including DNR and its Power Plant Research Program (PPRP) and MDE.

Pursuant to ambient air quality control provisions in the Environment Article, whenever PSC notifies the Secretary of the Environment about an application for a CPCN, the Secretary must prepare a recommendation regarding any MDE-required air quality control permits or registrations and issues that PSC must consider under the Public Utilities Article relating to climate change. The recommendations are incorporated into the process for obtaining a CPCN. MDE may not require an air quality permit for the construction of a generating station constructed by a person required to obtain a CPCN.

PSC regulations require a CPCN applicant to provide extensive information about the project’s potential environmental impact, including (1) a summary of the environmental effects of the construction and operation of the project, including a description of the unavoidable impact and recommended mitigation; (2) a copy of all studies of the environmental impact of the proposed project prepared by the applicant; and (3) a statement of the ability to conform to the applicable environmental standards.

State/Local/Small Business Effect:

Maryland Department of the Environment

Administrative Expenditures: General fund expenditures for MDE increase by \$1,922,804 in fiscal 2026, which accounts for the bill’s October 1, 2025 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring 22 new employees (3 Assistant Attorneys General, 2 fiscal service administrators, 14 regulatory and compliance engineers, 2 administrators, and 1 regulatory and compliance engineer supervisor) to (1) process substantially more permit applications that are subject to existing public participation requirements; (2) develop regulations; (3) review environmental impact assessments; (4) make official determinations regarding whether a proposed project will contribute to an increased potential for adverse community environmental and public health impacts within an at-risk census tract; (5) collaborate with CEJSC, MDH, and elected officials to review existing burden reports for accuracy and sufficiency; (6) make permit determinations based on whether a project will cause or contribute to an increased potential for adverse community environmental and public health impacts in an at-risk census tract and develop and impose permit conditions for conditionally approved permits; (7) provide oversight for conditionally approved permits and related mitigation fund agreements; (8) make additional information available to the public, as required; (9) ensure that at least 25% of the revenue from enforcement actions at specified facilities is distributed to a special fund to be used to assist affected communities; and (10) incorporate EJ Scores, existing burden report findings, and measures to meet the bill’s requirements regarding cumulative impacts mitigation fund agreements into MDE’s CPCN recommendations. The estimate includes salaries, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs (including contractual programming costs), and ongoing operating expenses (including costs to publish additional information in newspapers).

Positions	22.0
Salaries and Fringe Benefits	\$1,645,691
Contractual Services (Programming)	100,000
Other Operating Expenses	<u>177,113</u>
Total FY 2026 MDE Admin. Expenditures	\$1,922,804

Future year expenditures reflect full salaries with annual increases and employee turnover as well as annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

Revenues from Enforcement Actions: The bill requires that at least 25% of the revenue from any enforcement action against a facility located within a 1.5-mile radius of the boundary of an at-risk census tract be distributed to a special fund to be used to assist affected communities. The extent to which the bill itself affects overall penalty revenues collected for violations – and the extent to which this provision affects the distribution of penalty revenues MDE collects pursuant to existing enforcement provisions – is unclear. Under current law, for at least several affected permits, statute directs certain penalties to various MDE special funds (such as the Maryland Clean Air Fund and the Maryland Clean Water Fund) to be used for the authorized purposes of those funds. The bill appears to redirect a portion of those revenues to a (new) special fund in MDE to be used to assist affected communities; the operation of that special fund is to be determined by MDE by regulation. The extent to which this requirement also has the potential to redistribute any penalties that would otherwise go to the general fund (for cases heard in the District Court) or local governments (for cases heard in the circuit courts) is unclear and has not been accounted for in this analysis.

Revenues from Permit Fees, Generally: The bill itself does not alter any existing fees for permits issued by MDE. However, the bill has broad impacts on MDE’s permitting process and, therefore, may affect special fund revenues from permit fees that MDE collects pursuant to current law. Any such impact cannot be reliably estimated at this time but could be significant.

Public Service Commission – Administrative Expenditures

PSC advises that the additional information submitted to PSC by MDE for affected CPCN applications – that it must evaluate as part of the CPCN application process – falls outside the expertise of its existing technical staff. As a result, the incremental workload resulting from the bill cannot be absorbed within existing resources. Accordingly, special fund expenditures for PSC increase by \$93,006 in fiscal 2026, which accounts for the bill’s October 1, 2025 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one climate policy and impact analyst to review the additional information submitted by MDE for affected CPCN applications. It includes a salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

Position	1.0
Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$83,387
Operating Expenses	<u>9,619</u>
Total FY 2026 PSC Expenditures	\$93,006

Future year expenditures reflect a full salary with annual increases and employee turnover as well as annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

Generally, PSC is funded through an assessment on the public service companies that it regulates. As a result, special fund revenues for PSC increase correspondingly from assessments imposed on public service companies.

Department of Natural Resources – Administrative Expenditures

Because PPRP independently assesses CPCN projects for potential environmental impacts, PPRP advises that it will need to examine the additional information submitted by MDE for affected CPCN applications under the bill. According to DNR, existing staff within PPRP cannot handle the anticipated increase in workload and it needs additional staff – as well as technical support from consultants – to complete its evaluations of CPCN applications.

In general, special funds from the Environmental Trust Fund are used to fund PPRP’s operations. However, general funds may be required to cover part or all of the expenses that PPRP incurs under the bill because DNR anticipates a special fund revenue shortfall.

Accordingly, general/special fund expenditures for DNR increase by \$203,506 in fiscal 2026, which accounts for the bill’s October 1, 2025 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of PPRP hiring one part-time site assessor and engaging consultants to evaluate the additional information submitted under the bill. It includes a salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses, in addition to \$150,000 in consulting expenses.

Position	0.5
Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$46,551
Consultant Costs	150,000
Other Operating Expenses	<u>6,955</u>
Total FY 2026 DNR Expenditures	\$203,506

Future year expenditures reflect (1) a full (half-time) salary with annual increases and employee turnover; (2) annual increases in ongoing operating expenses; and (3) annual increases in ongoing consultant costs.

Maryland Department of Health – Administrative Expenditures

General fund expenditures for MDH increase by \$90,756 in fiscal 2026, which accounts for the bill’s October 1, 2025 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one epidemiologist to collaborate with CEJSC, MDE, and elected officials to review existing burden reports for accuracy and sufficiency, as required by the bill. It includes a salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

Position	1.0
Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$83,387
Operating Expenses	<u>7,369</u>
Total FY 2026 MDH Expenditures	\$90,756

Future year expenditures reflect a full salary with annual increases and employee turnover as well as annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

Maryland Environmental Service

The Maryland Environmental Service (MES) is a not-for-profit unit of State government that operates environmental facilities and executes environmental projects across the State (such as landfills, material resources facilities, sewage treatment plants, sludge processing facilities, and solid waste transfer stations). MES customers include State agencies and local governments. MES anticipates that the bill results in significant impacts on its projects under the bill and that MES costs increase accordingly. As MES is a fee-for-service entity, any costs incurred by MES resulting from the bill are ultimately borne by the entities that contract for MES services through an increase in fees. As a result, MES nonbudgeted expenditures and revenues increase correspondingly.

Effect on Permit Applicants and Permit Holders

The bill’s impact on any entity that applies for a new, renewal, or expansion permit affected by the bill (which could include State agencies, local governments, and small businesses) is likely significant. The bill requires substantial additional information and assessments to be collected and conducted for inclusion in affected permit applications. Costs to complete the required environmental impact analysis and, in some cases, an existing burden report, are likely significant. For some affected permits, permit applicants also bear the costs associated with publishing the required public notices; as a result, permit applicants incur additional costs associated with the bill’s expanded public notice requirements. In addition, the bill requires conditional permit holders to enter into cumulative impacts mitigation fund agreements (and pay ongoing fees), which further increases costs for such permit holders.

Due to the significant additional regulatory requirements established, the bill likely increases the amount of time that it takes to obtain a permit. As a result, affected permit applicants likely experience permitting delays and associated cost increases. And in some cases, the bill may result in the denial of permit applications that would otherwise be approved.

Additional Effects on Local Governments

In addition to the effects discussed above that could affect local governments as permit applicants and permit holders, the bill likely has other effects on local government finances and operations, as discussed below.

Administrative Costs: According to MDE, local governments may need to allocate additional resources to review permit applications, facilitate public hearings, and coordinate with State agencies. This could result in the need for additional staff and associated administrative costs, especially in areas with significant development activity. Local health departments (LHDs) are often delegated permitting authority by MDE. As a result, under the bill, LHDs with delegated authority likely need to review additional information submitted by permit applicants, including, when applicable, existing burden reports (for accuracy and sufficiency). The Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO) advises that in general, LHDs are understaffed and underfunded, and the additional workload resulting from the bill likely requires additional staff. Specifically, MACHO estimates that each LHD likely needs to hire between one and three environmental health specialists (or trainees) to implement the bill. MACHO notes that the starting annual salary for an environmental health specialist is approximately \$47,000.

Revenues from Enforcement Actions: To the extent the bill's provision that requires at least 25% of the revenue from *any* enforcement action against a facility located within a 1.5-mile radius of the boundary of an at-risk census tract applies to actions brought by local governments themselves and/or redirects any penalty revenues that would otherwise accrue to local governments, local penalty revenues from such enforcement actions decrease.

Additional Effects on Small Businesses

In addition to the effects discussed above that could affect small businesses as permit applicants and permit holders, the bill may create new opportunities for small businesses that specialize in environmental consulting, compliance, and sustainable practices. Businesses that offer eco-friendly solutions or work in the renewable energy sector may benefit from an increase in the demand for their services that align with the more stringent environmental permitting requirements.

Additional Comments: The [Maryland EJ tool](#) is, as of the publication of this fiscal and policy note, temporarily inoperable due to federal data issues.

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: HB 1484 (Delegate J. Lewis) - Environment and Transportation and Economic Matters.

Information Source(s): Maryland Association of County Health Officers; Maryland Environmental Service; Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Queen Anne's, and St. Mary's counties; Maryland Association of Counties; Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority; City of Annapolis; Maryland Municipal League; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Morgan State University; Interagency Commission on School Construction; Maryland Department of Agriculture; Maryland Department of the Environment; Department of General Services; Department of Natural Resources; Public Service Commission; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

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