

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2007 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 551

(Anne Arundel County Delegation)

Environmental Matters

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Housing and Community Development - Radium Pilot Grant Program - Sunset Repeal

This bill repeals the termination date for the Radium Pilot Grant Program in the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), and renames it the Radium Grant Program (RGP).

The bill takes effect July 1, 2007.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Minimal expenditures for RGP would continue past FY 2008. Expenditures have been less than \$1,500 since FY 2005, and are projected to remain minimal.

Local Effect: Minimal expenditures for the matching grants would continue past FY 2008.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: The Radium Pilot Grant Program was authorized to provide financial assistance in the form of grants to residential well owners who must pay for adding a water treatment system to remove radium or gross alpha from well water. In order to qualify for financial assistance, an applicant must:

- live in a county that participates in the program;

- test a well and find that it contains radium or gross alpha in excess of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommended levels;
- install a water treatment system; and
- earn 110% or less of the Washington DC area median income.

The county must administer the grants, and provide a matching grant. The combined grants must total 10% to 25% of the total cost of the water treatment system.

The program is authorized for three years once funds are available in the State budget to implement it. DHCD advises that regulations were finalized in April 2005, and the program began operating that year.

Background: Radium in drinking water does not pose an immediate health threat, but may have adverse health effects over the long term. Radium and other gross alpha radiation can be readily reduced from residential wells by installing a deeper well or effective water treatment devices such as water softeners, ion removal, and reverse osmosis systems.

DHCD advises that Anne Arundel is the only county that participates in this program. There have been seven grants since implementation. Total State expenditures for the grants since 2005 were \$1,307, which was equally matched by Anne Arundel County.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 147 (Chair, Anne Arundel County Senators) – Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

Information Source(s): Department of Housing and Community Development, Department of Legislative Services

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