

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2007 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 1075

(Delegate Bartlett, *et al.*)

Environmental Matters

Study to Evaluate Strategies to Reduce Deer-Vehicle Collisions

This bill requires the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the Department of State Police (DSP) to jointly conduct a study to evaluate strategies to reduce deer-vehicle collisions. A report on the participating agencies' findings and recommendations must be submitted to the General Assembly by October 1, 2008.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2007, and terminates October 31, 2008.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Transportation Trust Fund expenditures could increase by up to \$30,000 in FY 2008 and/or FY 2009 for consulting services required by MDOT to jointly conduct the study with DNR and DSP. DNR and DSP would utilize existing staff for the study. Revenues would not be affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: A similar study is not required under State law.

Background: Because white-tailed deer thrive in habitat that is composed of woods and openings and because hunter access in those areas is limited, suburban development has

provided excellent deer habitat in the State, resulting in a significant increase in the deer population. In 2001, approximately 4,200 deer were reportedly killed by vehicles (or about one deer killed for every 57 deer in the population). DNR reports that at least that many deer are struck by vehicles, but not recovered or reported. Each deer-vehicle collision results in an average of \$2,000 in collision damage.

DNR's Deer Project conserves and manages white-tailed deer and the exotic sika deer. The project aims to maintain deer populations at levels that ensure compatibility with human land uses and natural communities. The State's current Deer Management Plan seeks to stabilize white-tailed deer populations at 1997-1998 levels, and DNR reports the current population in many areas of the State continues to be near or below those levels. Revised population goals are expected to be established in 2007. During the 2006-2007 bow, firearms, and muzzleloader hunting seasons, Maryland deer hunters harvested 91,930 white-tailed deer, down roughly 2% from the 2005-2006 season.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Natural Resources, Department of State Police, Maryland Department of Transportation (State Highway Administration), Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 12, 2007
nas/ljm

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