

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2008 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 920

(Senator Brinkley, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Environmental Matters

Task Force to Study Statewide Gypsy Moth Infestation

This bill establishes a Task Force to Study Statewide Gypsy Moth Infestation staffed by the departments of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Budget and Management. The task force must study the statewide infestation of gypsy moths and make recommendations regarding the most effective practical, regulatory, and legislative means of combating the infestation. A reporting requirement is established.

The bill terminates September 30, 2009.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for MDA, DNR, and DBM are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: The mission of the Forest Pest Management Section within MDA is to serve the citizens of Maryland by protecting the rural and urban forest landscape tree resources from adverse effects of insects, diseases, and other pests through environmentally sound pest management.

According to MDA, the most destructive forest pest in Maryland is the gypsy moth. Since 1980, the gypsy moth has defoliated more than one million acres in the State. MDA's Forest Pest Management Section conducts an integrated pest management program for the gypsy moth through monitoring, assessment, information and education, and pest control actions. The Maryland Cooperative Gypsy Moth Suppression Program is a voluntary program involving the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, MDA, local governments, and landowners.

In the past, the program has operated on a cost-share basis with the federal government and local governments; however, MDA advises that the federal government has shifted its attention away from the Mid-Atlantic states in an effort to contain the gypsy moth from moving into the Midwest. MDA requested a fiscal 2008 deficiency appropriation of approximately \$3.5 million in general funds and \$0.36 million in special funds from county participation to replace lost federal funds. During the 2008 session, MDA was notified that the federal government would provide \$0.63 million for gypsy moth suppression in fiscal 2008. The General Assembly responded by reducing the \$3.5 million fiscal 2008 deficiency appropriation by \$0.43 million, allowing MDA to retain \$0.2 million for post-suppression surveys and other incidental costs of spraying the 99,000 acres designated for gypsy moth suppression in the spring of 2008.

General fund deficiency requests were approved in fiscal 2006 (\$0.35 million) and fiscal 2007 (\$1.1 million) due to the lack of sufficient federal funding and increases in gypsy moth populations.

The fiscal 2009 budget includes approximately \$2.0 million in general funds and \$0.3 million in special funds to reestablish a baseline gypsy moth suppression program to spray 25,000 acres.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Department of Agriculture, Department of Budget and Management, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 14, 2008
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