

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2013 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 437

(Senator Peters)

Finance

Health - Youth Camps - Definitions

This bill alters the definition of “residential camp” for certification purposes. Specifically, the bill defines “residential camp” as a youth camp operating at a facility or campsite at which a camper lives apart (or intends to live apart) from the camper’s relatives, parents, or legal guardians for at least *six* (rather than five) – consecutive days. The bill further specifies that a youth camp operating at a facility or campsite at which a camper lives apart (or intends to live apart) from the camper’s relatives, parents, or legal guardians for *five* consecutive days is considered a “day camp” for certification purposes.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2013.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund revenues decrease minimally in FY 2013 and by \$7,800 annually beginning in FY 2014 due to the reclassification of certain residential youth camps as day camps. Expenditures are not affected.

Local Effect: The bill’s requirements do not substantively affect local finances as the bill does not eliminate the need for inspections of the reclassified camps.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: In general, “youth camp” or “camp” means any camp that (1) accommodates at least seven campers who are unrelated to the person operating the camp and (2) provides primarily recreational activities or has a substantial outdoor

recreational component. “Residential camp” means a youth camp (including a “trip camp” or a “travel camp”) operating at a facility or campsite at which a camper either lives apart or intends to live apart from the camper’s relatives, parents, or legal guardians for at least five consecutive days. A “day camp” operates for fewer than 24 hours per day.

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) is required to monitor, inspect, and certify all youth camps (regardless of whether they are classified as day or residential camps). Typically, this is accomplished through local health departments. The fees for a certificate or letter of compliance vary depending on (1) whether a camp is considered a day camp or a residential camp and (2) the number of camper days (*i.e.*, the estimated number of campers enrolled each day multiplied by the number of days a camp may operate during a camping season). Currently, fees for day camps range from \$200 to \$900, while fees for residential camps range from \$500 to \$2,000.

In general, DHMH regulations make few distinctions between residential and nonresidential camps with regard to safety requirements. However, nonprimitive residential camps are required to have more toilets and hand-washing units per camper than are nonresidential camps. In addition, while all youth camps must have a health treatment area, residential camps must have a health treatment area that meets additional requirements (such as running water). Residential camps are also subject to additional standards for vaccination records and sleeping facilities (*i.e.*, bedding must be sanitary).

State Revenues: DHMH estimates that almost two dozen camps would, under the bill, no longer be considered residential camps. DHMH further estimates that, of these, about one-half will have paid the required fee for the upcoming season prior to the bill’s June 1 effective date so that they may begin operating in June or even earlier. DHMH advises that renewal applications and fees are due at least 30 days prior to operation. Thus, general fund revenues from youth camp fees decrease only minimally in fiscal 2013 for those camps that renew during the month of June for July, or even later, opening dates. Beginning in fiscal 2014, all camps renew at some point during the year. Accordingly, based on the number and size of youth camps reclassified under the bill, general fund revenues decrease by \$7,750 in fiscal 2014 and future years due to the lower fees collected for almost all reclassified camps. Because of their size, however, two camps actually pay a slightly higher fee (\$525 rather than \$500) due to the reclassification.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: SB 381 of 2011, a similar bill, passed the Senate but received an unfavorable report from the House Health and Government Operations Committee.

Its cross file, HB 1027, passed the House and received a hearing in the Senate Finance Committee, but no further action was taken.

Cross File: Although designated as a cross file, HB 918 (Delegates Valentino-Smith and Hubbard - Health and Government Operations) is not identical.

Information Source(s): Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 12, 2013
ncs/ljm

Analysis by: Jennifer A. Ellick

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510