

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

House Bill 202 (Montgomery County Delegation)
Environment and Transportation Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Department of the Environment - SepticSmart Week in Montgomery County
MC 17-19

This bill requires the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to establish the third week in September as SepticSmart week in Montgomery County. During SepticSmart week, MDE must use the educational materials provided under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) SepticSmart initiative and other resources to promote community awareness regarding (1) the proper use and maintenance of on-site sewage disposal systems and (2) the impact of proper design, installation, operation, and maintenance of those systems on preserving surface and underground waters, promoting public health, and avoiding costly repairs.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: MDE can likely implement the bill’s requirement with existing budgeted resources, as discussed below. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: Montgomery County can handle any required coordination with MDE using existing resources. Local revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: MDE’s Onsite Systems Division provides technical assistance and direction to county health departments and local approving authorities for the implementation of delegated programs for on-site sewage disposal systems (commonly referred to as septic systems) and individual wells. Pursuant to current regulations, a person

may not construct or attempt to construct a septic system without first obtaining a permit from the appropriate approving authority. According to MDE, there are approximately 420,000 septic systems in Maryland. MDE does not currently participate in any SepticSmart weeks in the State.

EPA's SepticSmart initiative is a nationwide public education effort with resources for homeowners, local organizations, and government leaders. EPA has numerous [links](#) on its website to teach homeowners how septic systems work and to provide tips on how to properly maintain a septic system. EPA also has posters and other materials available for download for various target audiences.

State Expenditures: MDE advises that as long as electronic distribution of EPA program materials satisfies the bill's requirements, it can implement the bill using existing budgeted resources. However, to the extent that MDE must print and distribute hard copies of those educational materials, expenditures may increase.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Montgomery County; Maryland Department of the Environment; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 11, 2019
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