

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2022 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Third Reader**

House Bill 882 (Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee)(By  
Request - Departmental - Natural Resources)

Environment and Transportation Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

---

**Natural Resources – Pocomoke River Wildland – Alteration of Boundaries**

---

This departmental bill alters the boundaries of the Pocomoke River Wildland by exempting a specified tract of land serving as a trail course and adding a specified tract of land. The bill indicates that the alterations increase the net size of the wildland by approximately 80 acres, to a total of 3,109 acres.

---

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** The bill is not expected to materially affect State finances.

**Local Effect:** The bill does not directly affect local government finances.

**Small Business Effect:** The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has determined that this bill has minimal or no impact on small business (attached). The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) concurs with this assessment as discussed below.

---

**Analysis**

**Current Law:** There is a State wildlands preservation system established in statute for the purpose of securing for the people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of State wildlands. “Wildlands” are defined as limited areas of land or water which have retained their wilderness character, although not necessarily completely natural and undisturbed, or have rare or vanishing species of plant or animal life or similar features of interest worthy of preservation for use of present and future residents of the State.

The Pocomoke River Wildland is 1 of 38 separate wildlands designated in statute that consist of approximately 66,000 acres in total. Generally, the wildland areas must be devoted to public purposes for recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, and historical use.

The Secretary of Natural Resources may review areas under the Secretary's jurisdiction as to their suitability for preservation as State wildlands and report findings to the Governor. The Governor, in turn, makes recommendations to the General Assembly with respect to the designation or reclassification of wildland areas or alteration of boundaries. Such additions or changes can only be made by the General Assembly. The Secretary must provide specified notice to the public and relevant State and local officials and hold a public hearing at a location convenient to the area affected prior to submitting recommendations to the Governor.

Money may not be appropriated for the payment of expenses or salaries for the administration of the State wildlands preservation system as a separate unit, nor may appropriations be available for additional personnel required solely for the purpose of managing or administering areas solely because they are included within the State wildlands preservation system. Each unit administering any area designated as wildlands is responsible for preserving the wildland character of the area and administering the other purposes for which it was established in order to preserve its wildland character.

**Background:** The State wildlands preservation system, which is similar to the National Wilderness Preservation System, was established with the passage of the Maryland Wildlands Act in 1971. The State wildlands were last altered by Chapter 465 of 2014, which expanded 14 wildland areas (including the Pocomoke River Wildland) and added 9 wildland areas.

DNR indicates that in addition to adding approximately 80 net acres to the Pocomoke River Wildland, the bill creates the opportunity to establish a minimum impact elevated trail through the wildland, connecting the Town of Snow Hill to Pocomoke State Park, providing social, recreational, and economic benefits.

**Small Business Effect:** DLS concurs that the bill has no negative impact on small businesses but notes that DNR and Worcester County indicate that small businesses in the surrounding area may benefit from the bill to the extent that the new trail increases tourism and outdoor recreation.

## Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Worcester County; Department of Natural Resources;  
Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 21, 2022  
rh/lgc Third Reader - March 17, 2022

---

Analysis by: Scott D. Kennedy

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

## ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC IMPACT ON SMALL BUSINESSES

TITLE OF BILL: Natural Resources – Pocomoke River Wildland – Alteration of Boundaries

BILL NUMBER: HB 882

PREPARED BY: Lisa Eutsler, Legislative and Regulations Coordinator

### PART A. ECONOMIC IMPACT RATING

This agency estimates that the proposed bill:

WILL HAVE MINIMAL OR NO ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND SMALL BUSINESS

**OR**

WILL HAVE MEANINGFUL ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND SMALL BUSINESSES

### PART B. ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS