



HARFORD COUNTY, MARYLAND

Office of the County Auditor

FISCAL IMPACT NOTE

Bill Number:
17-005

Agricultural Preservation
Easement Incentive

Sponsor:
Council President Slutzky
at the request of the
County Executive

Estimated Fiscal Impact:
Not determined

Summary of Legislation

AN ACT to repeal and reenact, with amendments, Subsection J, Value of easement; and to add new Subsection T, Tax credit, of Section 60-12, Agricultural preservation easement, of Article II, Agricultural Land Preservation and Purchase of Development Rights Program, of Chapter 60, Agriculture, of the Harford County Code, as amended; to provide for a one-time cash incentive for properties located in the Agricultural Preservation Incentive area; to set forth the potential for a tax credit; and otherwise related to the Agricultural Preservation Program.

The bill will take effect 60 days after it is adopted.

Fiscal Analysis

The County's Agricultural Preservation program uses a portion of the County's transfer tax revenue to purchase development rights easements from local property owners. The easements restrict the number of new non-agricultural structures that a property owner may legally build on the property. After owners apply, properties are systematically evaluated and ranked by the Department of Planning and Zoning who then recommends which owners should be offered a purchase agreement.

This bill adds a provision that would afford the County the ability to provide a one-time cash incentive for properties located in the Agricultural Preservation Incentive Area. Management expects the incentive to be an additional \$1,000 per acre. The Agricultural Incentive Map is demarcated in two distinct areas: 1) Jarrettsville/Forest Hill and; 2) Churchville. The goal of the program is to further incentivize non-priority property owners to sell development rights rather than hold their property for potential development.

This provision may increase the total purchase cost to the County of certain development rights easements; however, we cannot estimate with reasonable accuracy which properties will be at the top of the Easement Priority Rankings; if the County will target those properties; and, if the owners of targeted properties will be agreeable to the incentive. Accordingly, the fiscal impact of this legislation cannot be determined.

Additional Information

Fiscal Note History: Version 02 based on bill as introduced 03/21/17.
Fiscal Analysis was prepared by Chrystal Brooks, County Auditor.
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