

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

FISCAL NOTE

BILL NO. Senate Bill 597

PRINTER NO. 1579

AMOUNT

See Fiscal Impact

FUND

Local Funds

DATE INTRODUCED

April 21, 2021

PRIME SPONSOR

Senator Stefano

DESCRIPTION

Senate Bill 597 amends Title 27 to provide for water and wastewater asset management plans.

This legislation provides definitions for 'community wastewater system', 'community water system', 'critical valve', 'wastewater system operator' and 'water system operator'. Community water system operators and community wastewater system operators are required to submit an annual asset management plan to the Department of Environmental Protection (department) for review and approval every three years. The department's requirements for submitted plans are provided for in the legislation and include such items as schedules of planned repairs, estimates of infrastructure to be improved and projected spending to implement the plan. The plans shall be due and updated on a schedule established by the department.

The bill requires a water provider to set an allowable error rate and to develop a testing protocol as part of the asset management plan. Operators with cyber infrastructure must establish a cybersecurity program. Water system operators must annually inform customers of compliance with the requirements of this chapter. A plan must be developed or be under development to be eligible for financial assistance from the Commonwealth. All system operators must report to the department the gross intra-state operating revenues for the preceding year.

Senate Bill 597 allows for the department's costs to be offset by fees assessed to the system operators.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Senate Bill 597 will have no fiscal impact on Commonwealth funds. The legislation requires all expenses incurred by the department to administer and enforce this legislation to be offset by fees paid by system operators.

The department anticipates the need for 16 staff in the Safe Drinking Water Program totaling \$2 million in anticipated costs. It is estimated that 535 community water systems would be subject to the provisions of the legislation resulting in a \$3,738 annual fee for each system subject to the provisions of the bill.

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The department also anticipates the need for 16 staff in the Clean Water Program totaling \$2 million in anticipated costs. It is estimated that as many as 1,068 sewage facilities would be subject to the provisions of the bill, resulting in a fee of not less than \$1,872 per year. Fee amounts may differ based on a final determination of the number of systems subject to the provisions of the bill.