



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
2009-10 Legislative Session

FISCAL NOTE

HOUSE BILL: 262

PRINTER'S NO: 282

PRIME SPONSOR: Haluska

FISCAL IMPACT SUMMARY	FY 2008/09	FY 2009/10
Expenditure Increase/(Decrease):		
General Fund	\$0	\$0

OVERVIEW:

House Bill 262 establishes the Prescribed Burning Practices Act. The bill encourages the continued use of prescribed burning for fuel reduction, ecological, forest, wildlife and grassland management purposes.

The bill requires the State Forester to promulgate standards within six months of the effective date (including a 60-day public comment period), for the planning and conduct of prescribed burning in the Commonwealth. In doing so, the State Forester shall consult with the Department of Environmental Protection, the Pennsylvania Game Commission and other public agencies and private organizations which have interest or experience in the practice of prescribed burning.

The standards shall include but are not limited to (1) minimum qualifications and training requirements for prescribed burn managers and other persons participating in a prescribed burn, and (2) required content for prescribed burn plans. To the greatest extent practicable, the standards shall be consistent with comparable requirements established by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group.

If deemed necessary, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) may establish a training program for prescribed burn managers and other persons participating in a prescribed burn. If a training program is established, DCNR is authorized to charge and collect fees from persons participating in training or certification programs.

This bill also establishes certain immunities for those individuals contracting with or authorizing a prescribed burn, prescribed Burn Managers, and persons under the Manager's supervision, provided these individuals have met the standards established in this legislation.

This act shall take effect immediately.

ANALYSIS:

According to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Department can carry out the requirements of this bill with existing personnel and does not expect any additional costs related to adoption of this legislation.

House Bill 262 authorizes DCNR to charge and collect fees from persons participating in training or certification programs if the Department deems such programs are necessary.

PREPARED BY: Antoinette L. Marchowsky, Budget Analyst
House Appropriations Committee, (D)

DATE: March 30, 2009

General Note and Disclaimer: *This Fiscal Note was prepared pursuant to House Rule 19(a), and the elements considered and reported above are required by Section 5 of the rule. Estimates are calculated using the best information available. Actual costs and revenue impact incurred may vary from estimates.*