

Department of Planning and Budget
2025 General Assembly Session
State Fiscal Impact Statement

The Habitat Management Division currently has 15 positions, including four Environmental Specialist II roles as permit writers who are at capacity. MRC is statutorily required to serve as the default local wetlands board when a locality has not adopted or has rescinded the adoption of an ordinance. In comparison to 47 Tidewater localities with 30 existing local wetlands boards, six boards have been rescinded recently, and the agency estimates that every two to three boards lost requires one additional Environmental Specialist. Additional responsibilities incurred by the Division due to rescinded ordinances include reviewing and processing applications, conducting public interest reviews, working with applicants, contractors, and permit agents to obtain missing information, conducting onsite investigations, and coordinating with state and federal advisory and regulatory agencies. MRC receives approximately 2,800 applications annually and has experienced a 39 percent rise in the number of joint permit applications. The complexity, size, and volume of applications have also increased.

The table below outlines the estimated cost to MRC each fiscal year for the Environmental Specialist position. The total salary and benefits are projected at \$99,354, with MRC reporting an expected starting salary of \$60,000 and estimated fringe benefits totaling \$39,354. Additional expenses, based on the agency's anticipated needs, include \$9,396 for leasing a truck as a work vehicle, \$3,000 for vehicle maintenance, \$3,000 for IT equipment and support, and \$1,000 for office supplies.

Expense	GF Impact
Salary	\$60,000
Fringe Benefits	\$39,354
Truck (leased)	\$9,396
Truck Maintenance Costs	\$3,000
IT Equipment and Support	\$3,000
Office Supplies	\$1,000
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$115,750</i>

Other: HB2453 is identical to this bill. MRC is responsible for regulating general permits for living shorelines and for any living shorelines requiring subaqueous encroachment permit on state-owned subaqueous lands under Title 28.2, Chapter 12 of the Code of Virginia. MRC indicates this would require the agency to permit all work before any grant award.