

**NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY
LEGISLATIVE FISCAL NOTE**

BILL NUMBER: SB 1303 (First Edition)
SHORT TITLE: Certain Septic Tank Devices Required
SPONSOR(S): Senator Odom

FISCAL IMPACT					
	Yes (X)	No ()	No Estimate Available ()		
	<u>FY 1998-99</u>	<u>FY 1999-00</u>	<u>FY 2000-01</u>	<u>FY 2001-02</u>	<u>FY 2002-03</u>
EXPENDITURES					
General Fund	(up to) \$60,100	\$57,100	\$14,275		
POSITIONS:	1.0	1.0	1.0 (partial year)		
PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENT(S) & PROGRAM(S) AFFECTED: Commission for Health Services; Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Division of Environmental Health; Local Health Departments.					
EFFECTIVE DATE: Effective when bill becomes law and applies to permits for new septic tank systems issued on or after January 1, 1999.					

BILL SUMMARY: The bill directs the Commission for Health Services to require the use of an effluent filter and an access device with the installation of each new septic tank system beginning January 1, 1999. The use of an effluent filter will prevent the solid materials from leaving the septic tank and the use of an access device will provide access to the tank for service maintenance. Additionally, the bill instructs the Commission to develop standards for these devices and to adopt these requirements and standards by temporary rules by October 1, 1998. Finally, the Commission is required to study whether the current requirement that each septic tank site include a separate repair area can be amended for systems using the new access devices, and to report the study results to the Environmental Review Commission (ERC) by October 1, 2000.

ASSUMPTIONS AND METHODOLOGY: The Department of Environment and Natural Resources anticipates no increase in costs from the effluent filter and access device requirement. Currently, the Division of Environmental Health and the local health departments share the responsibility for inspecting and permitting new septic tank systems. The local health departments conduct the day-to-day work of application reviews, on-site inspections and permit issuance. Whereas the Division provides back-up support in the form of second opinions and

technical assistance. The addition of the effluent filter and access device requirement affects the type of information that must be contained within the permit and checked during an on-site inspection, but does not increase the number of permits issued and inspections conducted. Since no additional work is created by requiring the use of these new devices, DENR anticipates no increase in costs for either the state or local wastewater programs.

To conduct a study that is based on field testing the use of the effluent filters and access devices the Department anticipates the need to hire a dedicated, time limited engineer or third party contractor. Field testing will allow the Department to develop an informed recommendation to the ERC about whether the size of repair area can be reduced or eliminated without threatening the quality of ground or surface water.

The cost estimates provided by the Department are based on hiring an Environmental Engineer I to conduct the study. No estimate was available for the cost of a third party contractor, which may be a less expensive alternative to hiring and equipping a time limited engineer and which may allow the Department to begin the study more quickly without the delays associated with hiring new staff. The engineer or contractor would be responsible for study design, methodology, sample collection and data analysis. **Without additional funds to hire dedicated staff or a contractor, the Department's recommendations would be based on anecdotal evidence and literature review.**

	Year 1 July 98 - June 99	Year 2 July 99 - June 00	Year 3 July 00 - Oct. 00
1 Environmental Engineer I (Salary and Benefits)	\$42,100	\$42,100	\$10,525
Operating Expenses	18,000	15,000	3,750
Total	\$60,100	\$57,100	\$14,275

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS: None

FISCAL RESEARCH DIVISION

733-4910

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DATE: June 8, 1998



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