

Understanding Frederick County's Stormwater Remediation Fee

Stormwater runoff originates during precipitation when water flows over the ground. Impervious surfaces such as streets and rooftops increase runoff by preventing water from soaking into the ground. Water running over impervious surfaces can pick up sediment, chemicals, debris, and toxins which are carried to local waterways. These pollutants prevent waterways from being fishable and swimmable.

In 2012, the State of Maryland passed the Watershed Protection and Restoration Program (HB-987) which mandates that counties subject to a certain municipal stormwater permit institute a stormwater remediation fee. The purpose of the charge is to manage pollution carried by stormwater into local waterways.

The collected charges are placed in a *dedicated fund* and used to finance projects that treat polluted stormwater. Examples of these projects include, but are not limited to, street sweeping, storm drain cleaning, stormwater facility inspection, maintenance and upgrades, tree planting, water quality monitoring, watershed planning, and stormwater educational programming. The stormwater remediation fee is similar to fees for other public services such as sewer, drinking water, and state highways.

Who has to pay the Stormwater Remediation Fee?

The stormwater remediation fee applies to the nine largest counties in Maryland (Anne Arundel,

Baltimore, Carroll, Charles, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George's) and Baltimore City, which are federally required to treat stormwater runoff. Residents, businesses, and institutions in these areas are all required to pay the fee. The fee structure is established independently by each county/city and differs across the State.

What does the Stormwater Remediation Fee look like in Frederick County?

- Local and state government properties, municipalities, and volunteer fire company properties are exempt under the law. Agricultural and not-for-profit properties are not exempt from the fee.
- The Board of County Commissioners voted on May 30, 2013 to adopt a one cent (\$0.01) per year fee on all eligible properties.
- The County does collect funds for stormwater through the general fund from taxes, and increased its budget by \$1M in FY'14 to \$3.5M.

Hardship exemptions and credit/incentive programs:

There is a financial hardship program required by HB-987. To qualify for a substantial hardship exemption the

property must already have an exemption for the County's Bay Restoration Fund Fee. Properties with this exemption will automatically be exempt under the stormwater utility fee.

What can I do to help address stormwater runoff pollution?

Among other practices, residents can install rain barrels, rain gardens, and porous pavers, and practice Bay-Wise landscaping to help in the fight against stormwater runoff. Always remember with stormwater - *slow* it **down** and *soak* it **up**!



Rain Garden

Photo Courtesy of Rain Dog Designs

Additional Resources

Maryland Department of the Environment
Stormwater Fee FAQ:

<http://www.mde.state.md.us/programs/Marylander/Pages/StormwaterFeeFAQ.aspx>

Frederick County Stormwater Remediation
Fee webpage:

<http://frederickcountymd.gov/index.aspx?NIID=5507>

House Bill 987

<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frmMain.aspx?ys=2012rs%2fbillfile%2fhb0987.htm>

Contact Amanda Rockler (arockler@umd.edu, 240-393-8346), Watershed Restoration Specialist for Howard, Montgomery and Frederick Counties, to answer your questions about the fee and what you can do to reduce stormwater runoff on your property.

Please note: This factsheet is intended to provide an overview of the stormwater remediation fee at the time of publication. For more updates and information please go to:

<http://frederickcountymd.gov>

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