

**Department of Planning and Budget
2003 Fiscal Impact Statement**

1. Bill Number: HB2154
House of Origin Introduced Substitute Engrossed
Second House In Committee Substitute Enrolled
2. Patron: Hamilton
3. Committee: Agriculture, Chesapeake, and Natural Resources
4. Title: Virginia Department of Game and Marine Resources; established
5. Summary/Purpose: The bill combines the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) and the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) to form the Virginia Department of Game and Marine Resources. Existing regulations are to remain in effect until the new agency amends such regulations.
6. Fiscal Impact Estimates are: Unknown. See item 8.
7. Budget amendment necessary: Yes. The appropriation for Game and Inland Fisheries (Items 390 through 393) and the Marine Resources Commission (Items 396 through 399) should be amended to reflect the merger.
8. Fiscal implications: The merger may result in some savings through the elimination of duplicate administrative positions and one agency director position. However, because of the existing division of responsibilities, it is unlikely that program management or law enforcement positions could be eliminated. In the short term, any savings generated through the merger would be reduced by the cost of employee severance benefits for the administrative positions.

According to a study conducted by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) in 1997, "Consolidation of DGIF and VMRC is not expected to result in substantial cost savings." JLARC found that cost savings would be limited because it does not appear that reductions in agency line staff are warranted, and an office would still be needed in the Tidewater area to address marine issues (House Document 44, 1997 Session).
9. Specific agency or political subdivisions affected: Marine Resources Commission, Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.
10. Technical amendment necessary: Yes, line 229, reference to "Virginia Marine Police" should be changed to "Virginia Game and Marine Police."
11. Other comments: The bill does not address the continuance or administration of existing special funds established by Code and currently administered by DGIF or VMRC.

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cc:SecretaryofNaturalResources