

Commission on Local Government

Estimate of Local Fiscal Impact

2020 General Assembly Session

Bill: HB5135

Special Session: 1

Patron: Bell

Date: 9/2/2020

In accordance with the provisions of §30-19.03 of the Code of Virginia, the staff of the Commission on Local Government offers the following analysis of the above-referenced legislation:

Bill Summary:

Law-enforcement agencies; body-worn camera systems. Requires all law-enforcement agencies having jurisdiction over criminal law enforcement or regulatory violations to implement and operate a body-worn camera system and to require officers responsible for the prevention and detection of crime and the enforcement of penal, traffic, or highway laws to be equipped with a body-worn camera system. The bill also states that the written policy law-enforcement agencies are required to adopt prior to the operation of a body-worn camera system shall include requirements, listed in the bill, for when such system shall be activated.

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### Executive Summary:

Localities have evaluated a negative fiscal impact ranging from \$0.00 - \$950,000.00. A majority of localities responded with a cost and noted that the cost would be related to – (i) purchase of body worn cameras, (ii) software licensing (iii) storage and IT system expansion to maintain videos, (iv) and hiring additional staff,. Some localities were able to provide detailed estimates on the cost because they have already implemented or are in the process of developing body-worn camera systems for their law-enforcement agencies. Of those localities that responded with no cost, noted that the bill would not impact them because they are already in compliance with the provisions of the bill.

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### Local Analysis:

**Locality:** City of Manassas

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$50,000.00

We already utilize body-worn cameras and follow best practices as part of our national accreditation through CALEA. However, we do not have enough cameras for every sworn officer. In order to accomplish this, an additional expense of \$50,000 is expected.

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Locality: City of Norfolk

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

Based on the legislation, this will not have an impact as the city has already implemented all of the stated requirements in the bill.

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**Locality:** City of Virginia Beach

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$950,000.00

The City of Virginia Beach is presently in an advanced stage of implementation of its Police Body Worn Camera program. Despite the acquisition of 450 cameras and equipment, this bill would likely require additional camera investment by the City. At present, the VBPD equips mostly its uniform patrol with cameras. These are the Department officers who engage in routine law enforcement and public safety activities. However, the proposed text of 15.2-1723.1(B): "require all officers who are responsible for the prevention and detection of crime and the enforcement of the penal, traffic, or highway laws of the Commonwealth to be equipped with a body-worn camera system." Under this standard, most VBPD sworn officers, except perhaps for senior administration or plain clothes detectives in an active state of post-crime investigation (in other words, not in "prevention or detection"), would qualify for this requirement. That could require 300-400 additional cameras, accessories, and software licensing agreements to be procured by the City. Based on actual prior costs, the estimated cost for 360 cameras and equipment would cost about \$480,000. In addition, the ongoing fully annualized cost, once deployed, of software plans and packages for an additional 360 cameras would be about \$470,000. The estimated cost cited above is the full cost of the one-time purchase of equipment (subject to future replacement) and the fully annualized software cost; however, the software cost, as a recurring cost, would be far higher if this analysis was calculated over a multi-year or ten-year timeframe.

In addition, this bill sets forth no timeline for the implementation of this program. Generally, the City has rolled out its cameras in phases. Would immediate purchase and outfit be required for a jurisdiction that has a written policy already in place (that satisfies 15.2-1723.1(C)), as Virginia Beach does?

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Locality: Prince George County

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$565,000.00

Prince George County police officers do not currently wear body worn cameras. We have recently implemented some in-car cameras. The financial impact goes beyond the purchase of cameras for sworn officers. We would also be required to employ another Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney, and would need full-time or part-time employees to assist in managing data and freedom of information act requests in both our Police Department and County Attorney's Office. Data storage demands would require purchases to expand our IT infrastructure (servers and related equipment). Deputy's from our Sheriff's Department also run selective enforcement and serve warrants. It is unclear from the proposal whether they would have to wear body-worn cameras. This fiscal impact exists with HB 5043 along with training costs.

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**Locality:** Rappahannock County

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$120,500.00

This legislation represents a substantial unfunded mandate with the following expenditures required:

- 1) An Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney must be hired (1 for the first 75 BWCs). The burdened cost of this new employee is approximately \$107,000/year (\$75,000 direct salary)
- 2) BWC one time costs: \$7,500 minimum for 10 units
- 3) BWC recurring costs: \$6,000/year minimum for 10 units

Data obtained from a peer locality that has BWCs from Axon.

Total first year: \$120,500

Total recurring per year: \$113,000

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Locality: Town of Blacksburg

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$250,000.00

Our department has been in the process of implementing body-worn camera system. There are many phases of this project including the storage system to maintain the videos as well the equipment needed and the policies to be implemented. Also there is considerations outside the law enforcement agency, such as the pressures on the Commonwealth Attorney's offices.

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**Locality:** Town of Herndon

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$0.00

HB5135 won't effect the Town of Herndon fiscally, because Herndon already has body cams and the policy to go with them. This could be financially devastating to other localities and agencies throughout the state without the funding or infrastructure to support it.

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Locality: Town of Luray

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$250,000.00

Requirement on a small Department results would require the Town to purchase the cameras, software, and servers.

State funding would be necessary to establish this requirement

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**Locality:** Town of Marion.

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$500,000.00

Due to the initial cost, storage and maintenance of data, the costs could overwhelm small municipalities

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Locality: Town of Scottsville

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$10,000.00

A good study of camera costs and benefits appears at <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/BWCCostBenefit.pdf>

Our small town currently uses in-car cameras but not body-worn cameras. I assume no cost for policy development, because the bill provides for a model policy through DCJS. Outreach and adoption of such policy could happen during normally scheduled public meetings.

The study cited surveyed many departments, of different sizes, and found an average cost about \$2,000 per officer in operating costs. This covers camera hardware purchase and periodic replacement, but equally important, the cloud storage IT service necessary to handle the data. This is now a competitive service market, and many companies offer integrated solutions for both camera devices and data management, very similar to a cellphone company.

For our small town, the \$10,000 impact is significant, but attainable.

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**Locality:** Wise County

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$20,000.00

For the most part we are good on this one, may have to expand our inventory of Body Camera's to a small degree.

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Professional and Other Organization

Analysis:

Organization: Northern Neck PDC

No fiscal impact.

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