

NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL NOTE

BILL NUMBER: SB 1529 (Senate Finance Committee Substitute)

SHORT TITLE: Register of Deeds Fee Adjustments

SPONSOR(S): Senator Dalton

FISCAL IMPACT

Yes () No () No Estimate Available (X)

FY 2000-01 FY 2001-02 FY 2002-03 FY 2003-04 FY 2004-05

REVENUES

EXPENDITURES

**PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENT(S) &
PROGRAM(S) AFFECTED:** County Registers of Deeds

EFFECTIVE DATE: This act is effective October 1, 2000.

BILL SUMMARY:

This legislation amends G.S. 161-10 (a) to authorize county Registers of Deeds to collect a \$2 access fee to the Vital Records Network and to collect the cost of providing miscellaneous services.

ASSUMPTIONS AND METHODOLOGY:

Section 2 of SB 1529 authorizes county Registers of Deeds to collect a \$2 fee for access to the Vital Records Network. Currently, a North Carolina resident pays a \$10 fee to obtain an official birth certificate duplicate by travelling to Vital Records in Raleigh or by waiting 6-8 weeks for the duplicate to arrive via the mail request system. Of this \$10, \$5 is directed to the state General Fund and \$5 to the State Automation Fund. A Vital Records Network has been designed to allow North Carolina residents to obtain on-line access to official birth certificate duplicates from the Register of Deeds in their county of residence. The test pilot for this Vital Records Network is scheduled for implementation in Harnett County in August of this year.

Under current legislation, Registers of Deeds are only authorized to collect \$8 for access to this Vital Records Network. Of this \$8, \$5 is directed to the State Automation Fund and \$3 is directed to the state General Fund. This situation creates a \$2 discrepancy between obtaining a birth certificate via the network and obtaining a certificate by the conventional means of mail request or travel to Raleigh. Upon the passage of SB 1529, the fee for obtaining a birth certificate duplicate will be the same regardless of which method is used. Until the Harnett County pilot project is completed, there is no reliable estimate of the number of North Carolinians who will utilize the Vital Records Network. There is also no estimate of the number of counties that will participate in the program. Therefore, no estimate of the fiscal impact of this portion of the bill is available at this time. However, the majority of Registers of Deeds in the state feel that most residents will choose to utilize the Vital Records Network because of the time and expense of travel to Raleigh and the time involved in a mail request.

This bill also allows the county Register of Deeds to collect the costs of providing miscellaneous services. Under the bill, the Registers of Deeds may charge a fee for the actual expenses incurred from providing such services such as lamination, faxing, expedited delivery, etc. No estimate is available of the amount of uncompensated services provided by the 100 Registers of Deeds.

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

FISCAL RESEARCH DIVISION 733-4910

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DATE: June 29, 2000



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