152nd GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FISCAL NOTE

BILL:	**HOUSE BILL NO. 434**
SPONSOR:	**Representative Collins**
DESCRIPTION:	**AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 7 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL AND TRANSPARENCY IN PUBLIC HEARINGS.**

Assumptions:

1. This Act is effective upon signature of the Governor.

2. This Act requires the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) to hold public hearings with the following requirements:
    a. Allow for public in-person attendance and the opportunity to testify.
    b. Allow the public to virtually attend and testify in addition to in-person attendance and testimony.
    c. Allow all who wish to testify the opportunity to sign up at and during the public hearing.
    d. Provide proper notice and schedule for no less than 2 hours of testimony.
    e. Provide no limit to testimony unless the hearing officer determines that the number of persons wishing to testify is significant and necessitates a time limit with no person being limited to less than one minute of public testimony.

3. This Act expands upon the duties of DNREC by adding an in-person opportunity and additional requirements that expand hearing times for approximately 20 hearings per year. To implement the provisions of this Act, DNREC anticipates the need for the following:
    a. Recurring Costs: $200,576
        i. Required overtime for DNREC staff for expanded hearing requirements of $142,611 in Fiscal Year 2025 for 4 staff and 2 Natural Resource Police Officers including Other Employment Costs (OECs).
        ii. $57,965 Contractual costs for fleet vehicle, court reporter expenses, facility rental, and on-site technology support.

4. Future year personnel costs are assumed to increase at a rate of 2%.

Cost:

	General Fund
Fiscal Year 2025:	$200,576
Fiscal Year 2026:	$203,428
Fiscal Year 2027:	$206,337

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