

Fiscal Estimate Narratives

CTS 3/25/2013

LRB Number	13-1098/1	Introduction Number	SB-015	Estimate Type	Original
Description Municipal court fees					

Assumptions Used in Arriving at Fiscal Estimate

This bill increases the upper limit that municipal courts may impose in court costs for actions brought before the court. Currently, municipal courts may impose a fee of not less than \$15 nor more than \$28 for most actions brought before the court. This bill would raise the upper limit that may be imposed from \$28 to \$38.

Of each fee imposed under this section, the municipality pays \$5 to the state for deposit into the general fund. The municipality retains the balance. This bill does not change this provision.

As of December 2012 there were 245 municipal courts in Wisconsin. Because each municipality is allowed to set its own level of court costs within the statutory limits, there is no way to predict how much more revenue would be raised under the provisions of this bill.

In 2011 municipal courts disposed of 449,023 cases by forfeiture, default, guilty plea or no contest plea. (This figure is incomplete because not all municipal courts have reported their case totals.) It appears that nearly all of these cases are subject to court costs and thus could be subject to the higher costs allowed by this bill. If all municipal courts were to raise their allowable costs by the full \$10 allowed by this bill, then approximately \$4.49 million in additional costs would be imposed in municipal courts. There is no reliable data to determine the percentage of imposed costs that are collected by the municipal courts. All additional revenue collected would be retained by the municipalities.

Therefore, the amount of additional revenue that could be raised by imposition of the higher costs allowed under this bill would range from \$0 to approximately \$4.49 million, depending on the number of municipalities who adopted the higher limit.

Long-Range Fiscal Implications