

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2001 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 1079 (Delegate Burns)
Commerce and Government Matters

Vehicle Laws - Abandoned Vehicles

This bill changes the definition of an abandoned vehicle so that a vehicle left on private or public property for more than 24 hours without the property owner's consent is considered abandoned. It also requires State and local police departments to take any abandoned vehicle into custody.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill could be implemented by the State Police with existing resources.

Local Effect: Increase in revenues from additional towing fees. Increase in expenditures for additional towing, storage, and administration.

Small Business Effect: Potential minimal. To the extent that the bill generates additional revenue for towing companies, it will benefit small business.

Analysis

Current Law: A vehicle is defined as abandoned if it has remained on private property for more than 48 hours without the consent of the owner or person in control of the property or has remained illegally on public property for more than 48 hours. State and local police departments may take abandoned vehicles into custody, but are not required to do so.

Local Fiscal Effect: The bill would result in the need for local jurisdictions to tow more vehicles. The fiscal impact could vary by jurisdiction. It is generally expected, however, that the bill would result in additional expenditures due to the need to tow, store, and process additional vehicles. Towing fee revenues would also increase.

Kent County advises that the bill could require substantial expenditures because the county lacks the personnel to administer the paperwork involved or the storage space to accommodate the extra vehicles. The county also expresses concern about potential liability issues, such as property damage. Baltimore City advises that the bill could generate a minimal revenue increase from towing fees, but also potentially create operational problems. Montgomery County estimates that it would cost the county approximately \$127,000 to comply with the bill.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Transportation; Department of State Police; Department of General Services; Baltimore City; Kent, Montgomery, Prince George's, and Washington counties; Department of Legislative Services

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