

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2008 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 1593 (Delegate Wood)
Environmental Matters

**Low Speed Emergency Medical Services Vehicles - Operation in St. Mary's
County**

This bill enables a low speed emergency medical services vehicle to travel on a highway in St. Mary's County, as authorized by the county commissioners without obtaining a State vehicle registration. The bill also specifies that the Maryland Vehicle Law does not prevent St. Mary's County from designating a certain portion of a county highway or a State highway, subject to State Highway Administration approval, on which a low speed emergency medical services vehicle may travel.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2008.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Minimal decrease in Transportation Trust Fund revenues from exempting vehicles designated by St. Mary's County as low speed emergency medical services vehicles from vehicle registration fees.

Local Effect: Minimal decrease in St. Mary's County expenditures from exempting low speed emergency medical services vehicles from State vehicle registration fees. Revenues would not be affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The bill expands the definition of “emergency vehicle” to include a low speed emergency medical services vehicle. A “low speed emergency medical services vehicle” is a four-wheeled vehicle that is used to provide emergency medical services at outdoor activities or sporting events, with a maximum speed capability of 35 miles per hour, seating for a maximum of three people, medical equipment storage space, and a rear area for a patient cot.

Current Law: An emergency vehicle means any of the following: • federal, State, or local law enforcement agency vehicles; • vehicles of volunteer fire companies, rescue squads, and fire departments; • vehicles of the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems, and the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute; • State vehicles for oil or hazardous materials response; • State vehicles designated for emergency use by the Commissioner of Correction; • ambulances; and • special governmental vehicles used for emergency purposes as specified.

Except as otherwise provided, each motor vehicle, trailer, semitrailer, and pole trailer driven on a highway must be registered. If a motor vehicle is not registered, it may not be driven on any public alley, street, highway, or private property that is used by the general public. Vehicle registration is not required for certain vehicles as specified in the law.

The Maryland Vehicle Law does not prevent a local authority from exercising specified powers regarding highways under its jurisdiction, as long as the authority relates to the reasonable exercise of the local government’s police power. These powers include regulating traffic, restricting the use of highways, adopting any other traffic regulations that are specifically authorized, and restricting the use of a low speed vehicle on a highway.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): St. Mary’s County, Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

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mam/hlb

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