

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2014 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 356
Finance

(Senator Ferguson)

Economic Matters

Public Utilities - Fixed Charges for Taxicab Services - Baltimore City

This bill authorizes a taxicab in Baltimore City to charge a fixed amount for any trip between the Maryland Port Administration's cruise terminal facilities and (1) Fort McHenry; (2) the World Trade Center Institute in Baltimore; or (3) Penn Station in Baltimore. A fixed charge is further authorized for trips by taxicab between other points within Baltimore City, as approved by the Public Service Commission (PSC).

The bill takes effect June 1, 2014.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: PSC can implement the bill with existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Meaningful for taxicab permit holders located within Baltimore City to the extent they benefit from the ability to charge a fixed rate for certain trips.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: PSC regulates taxicabs in four jurisdictions: Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Hagerstown, and Cumberland. Generally, a person must have a permit issued by PSC whenever the person operates as a taxicab business in or from a point in these locations (except for Baltimore County, which issues its own licenses while PSC otherwise regulates). A fixed charge may be made for any trip by taxicab between a point within the political subdivision in which the taxicab is normally operated and a

point outside of the political subdivision. The fixed charge must be calculated on a mileage basis that PSC approves.

Taxicabs are distinct from other forms of for-hire transportation such as a limousine or private sedan car. To “provide taxicab services” means to operate a motor vehicle for hire that, in addition to other services:

- is held out to the public as a taxicab or as providing taxicab services;
- regardless of how or when engaged, provides for-hire service between points chosen by the passenger and for a fare that is based on the distance traveled, time elapsed, or both; or
- is engaged by the passenger for service between points chosen by the passenger that is provided through a hail from the street or other location or a request made at a taxi stand or other location where the motor vehicle is standing and waiting for a request for service.

There are approximately 1,150 permitted taxicabs in Baltimore City.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Public Service Commission, Office of People’s Counsel, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 28, 2014
mam/lgc

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