



# Maryland

## Department of the Environment

Larry Hogan, Governor  
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor

Ben Grumbles, Secretary  
Horacio Tablada, Deputy Secretary

February 28, 2020

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chair  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
House Office Building, Room 251  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Barve and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) has reviewed *House Bill 1215- Vehicle Emissions Inspection Program - Exemptions - Vehicles With Low Annual Mileage* and would like to provide information on the bill.

HB 1215 would remove existing exemption-qualifying criteria that can be independently verified through State records. MDE and the Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration (MDOT MVA) estimate that exempting vehicles based solely on self-certification of low annual mileage would produce approximately 600,000 additional exemptions during a two-year Vehicle Emissions Inspection Program (VEIP) test cycle, representing over 20% of the vehicles required to be tested.

Motor vehicles produce over one-third of the ozone-forming emissions that contribute to unhealthy air in our State, as well as nitrogen pollution of our waterways. While the State has made tremendous progress in reducing air pollution over the last several decades, the federal Clean Air Act requires vehicle emissions inspections in Maryland because some areas of the State exceed federal standards for ground-level ozone air pollution. This bill would create an unverifiable exemption that could result in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) disapproving of Maryland's VEIP Program. The emissions benefits lost from foregoing testing of 600,000 vehicles would have to be made up through other ozone reduction requirements, such as further reducing emissions from a variety of sources, like power plants and industrial facilities, which are already regulated. Failure to offset the lost emissions reductions from HB 1215 would make the State vulnerable to sanctions that would put hundreds of millions of dollars in federal highway funds at risk.

Governor Hogan's Administration has made great strides towards maximizing motorist convenience while also while preserving the important air quality benefits of the VEIP program. The self-service kiosks have gained wide motorist acceptance, and several exemptions have already been added to the program. An additional year has been provided before the initial required testing of newer vehicles. The VEIP is also moving toward an on-board diagnostics (OBD)-only program with the elimination of the idle test, as the idle test is only suitable for older-technology vehicles. It is likely that the phasing-out of the idle test has already removed the testing requirement for some of the older vehicles with low mileage accumulation that HB 1215 would exempt. Other vehicles expected to accumulate low mileage, including those with historic and street rod registrations, are already exempt.

Thank you for your consideration. We will continue to monitor House Bill 1215 during the Committee's deliberations, and I am available to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me at 410-260-6301 or by e-mail at [tyler.abbott@maryland.gov](mailto:tyler.abbott@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

Tyler D. Abbott  
cc: The Honorable William J. Wivell