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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
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**HB 304 – MOTOR VEHICLES – MODIFIED VEHICLE EXHAUST SYSTEM -
PENALTIES
SUPPORT**

GOOD AFTERNOON CHAIR BARVE, VICE CHAIR STEIN AND COLLEAGUES. I AM ASKING YOUR FAVORABLE REPORT FOR HB 304. THIS BILL AMENDS A CURRENT STATUTE THAT PROHIBITS THE MODIFICATION OF MOTOR VEHICLE EXHAUST SYSTEMS THAT INCREASE A VEHICLE'S NOISE ABOVE 95 DECIBELS.

THE 95 DECIBEL THRESHOLD **REPLACES** THE EXISTING NOISE STANDARD IN STATE LAW THAT SAYS A VEHICLE CANNOT BE MODIFIED IN A WAY THAT MAKES IT LOUDER THAN WHEN IT LEFT THE FACTORY. THAT STANDARD IS TOO DIFFICULT TO ENFORCE. HB 304 INCLUDES FINANCIAL PENALTIES FOR FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD VIOLATIONS OF THIS FLAT DECIBEL THRESHHOLD. IT EXEMPTS REGISTERED HISTORIC VEHICLES.

WE HEAR CONSISTENTLY FROM LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE EQUIPMENT TO MEASURE VEHICLE NOISE. IN RESPONSE TO THIS, THE BILL CREATES A SMALL GRANT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT TO PROPERLY MEASURE DECIBEL LEVELS EMITTED BY

VEHICLES AS THEY DRIVE. EQUIPMENT WOULD REDUCE WHAT IS CURRENTLY A SUBJECTIVE APPLICATION OF THE LAW IN WHICH MOST OFFICERS SAY THEY HAVE ENOUGH ON-THE-JOB EXPERIENCE TO DISCERN WHEN A VEHICLE IS TOO LOUD. FOR REFERENCE, A WHISPER IS 30 dB; NORMAL CONVERSATION IS 60 dB; AND A MOTORCYCLE ENGINE RUNNING IS ABOUT 95 dB. FOR VECHICLES EXCEEDING 95 dB, A POLICE OFFICER MAY ISSUE A “SAFETY EQUIPMENT REPAIR ORDER” SIMILAR TO A REPAIR ORDER FOR A BROKEN HEADLIGHT.

NOISE POLLUTION HAS BECOME AN AREA OF GREATER CONCERN IN RECENT YEARS BECAUSE OF ITS HAZARDOUS EFFECT ON HUMAN HEALTH, THE ENVIRONMENT AND QUALITY OF LIFE. NOISE PRODUCED BY VEHICLES IS ONE OF THE MAJOR CAUSES OF NOISE POLLUTION AND HAS RISEN SUBSTANTIALLY WITH THE INCREASED NUMBER OF MOTOR VEHICLES ON THE ROAD.

THIS BILL REPRESENTS A SMALL STEP TOWARD REDUCING NOISE POLLUTION IN MARYLAND AND THE HEALTH HAZARDS OUR CONSTITUENTS EXPERIENCE WHEN VEHICLES GO ROARING THROUGH THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS. THIS IS ESPECIALLY BURDENSOME FOR RESIDENTS WHO LIVE OR WORK NEAR BUSY ROADWAYS.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION. I URGE A FAVORABLE REPORT.

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