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Environment and Transportation
Committee

Subcommittees

Environment

Land Use and Ethics



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of HB43

Testimony by Delegate Vaughn Stewart

February 2, 2024 • Environment and Transportation Committee

What the Bill Does

HB 43 would legalize the use of golf carts on roads statewide, by authorizing counties and municipalities to determine whether or not to allow golf carts and small vehicles to drive on highways within their jurisdictions. This bill would repeal certain existing golf cart authorizations, replacing these specific laws with a statewide standard for the operation of golf carts on state highways and county roads.

The only remaining state-level requirements would maintain that the golf cart must be operated:

- On roads where the speed limit is 35 miles per hour or less,
- Between dawn and dusk,
- Only if the golf cart is equipped with lighting devices,
- As far to the right of the road as is feasible, and
- By a driver with a valid driver's license.

Why the Bill is Important

Every year, the Maryland General Assembly spends countless hours handling individual petitions from localities to allow golf carts and other small vehicles on their roads. For example, in 2017, [HB176](#) (Chapter 710) was passed to allow golf carts to travel on roads in the community of Golden Beach Patuxent Knolls, in St. Mary's County. In 2018, the legislature passed two separate bills ([SB215/SB353](#), Chapters 175/541) concerning the towns of Crisfield and Vienna, in the counties of Somerset and Dorchester, respectively. Several previous bills - including a 2021 bill ([SB604](#)) applying to Cecil County and a 2022 bill ([SB703](#)) applying to Frederick County - have ultimately failed, even though they maintained the same safety measures included in other golf cart laws.

These petitions consume valuable legislative time and energy. What's more, making these decisions at the state level denies authority to those who are best positioned to decide. How

should lawmakers in Annapolis know whether allowing golf carts on county roads is right for a community in St Mary's or Somerset County?

Why the Committee Should Vote Favorably

Passing this bill returns to the counties a discretion which should have been theirs in the first place: what kinds of vehicles are allowed on their roads. HB 43 will make their lives easier, as they will no longer have to come to Annapolis, begging for permission, and our lives easier, as we no longer have to spend valuable committee time on these requests.

Moreover, golf carts are good. They are simple to operate and maintain, they're less costly than traditional vehicles, and they're a boon to the environment.

HB 43 is a small bill with big consequences, both for those of us in Annapolis and for city and county governments across our state. I urge a favorable report.