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## THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

For the record, I am Delegate Ryan Nawrocki, requesting a favorable report on HB1495, *Baltimore County – Out-of-State Vehicles – Improper Registration*, which is co-sponsored by bipartisan members across the County. Most members of the Baltimore County Council support it. This bill will provide Baltimore County another tool to address the Virginia license plate issue, which has resulted in uninsured motorists driving on our roadways. It is enabling legislation that allows Baltimore County the option to tow vehicles that are improperly tagged per the timeframes outlined in state law. After an investigation occurs, Baltimore County can determine if the vehicle should have valid Maryland license plates.

This bill will not affect those who are in Maryland and have an out-of-state tag for legitimate reasons, such as: the military, traveling healthcare workers, students at a local college, or for other legitimate purposes. It simply provides a tool to close a loophole that exists because Maryland residents can get Virginia license plates without being a resident of Virginia. In Virginia, you can currently pay a fee by demonstrating you have insurance on your vehicle. While Virginia is closing this loophole in July, there are other states with a similar loophole such as New Hampshire. This bill is aimed at those who intentionally attempt to avoid Maryland law and drive on our roadways without insurance.

Recently, a constituent called the office to report an incident in his neighborhood. He has seen six vehicles with Virginia tags parked in a neighbor's driveway for longer than 60 days. He called the MVA to report the out-of-state tags, and an inspector from Glen Burnie came out to review the incident. The MVA issued a citation after determining that this Maryland resident had not properly registered their vehicle and used this Virginia loophole. The MVA removed the illegal tags. Then, the constituent informed us that a week later, the cars had replacement Virginia tags. Clearly the MVA is having difficulty putting a stop to this abuse on their own. Due to out-of-state tags, the MVA recently sent warning letters to over 34,000 residents regarding their improper registrations.

The county would still rely upon MVA investigators to determine if a vehicle owner is a Baltimore County resident. While Virginia tags are the biggest culprit, New Hampshire also does not require auto insurance, which could become a future problem. This bill would address the issue by allowing the county to tow any improperly tagged vehicles. The bill aims to eliminate any potential misconduct associated with using out-of-state tags.

The influx of Virginia tags has become financially enticing for drivers in Baltimore County and across Maryland. The allure of saving money is encouraging a dangerous trend across the State. Some view this as a cost-effective alternative to following the proper procedures outlined by the MVA. Many second-hand vendors dealing with Virginia tags merely request a title and a driver's license without subjecting the vehicle to any inspection, which starkly contrasts the procedures in Maryland.

The statewide registration requirement is in place to ensure that vehicle owners are in compliance with critical state motor vehicle laws. These laws include emissions testing, insurance requirements, administrative penalties for citations, and other important measures intended to promote public safety.

Many of these cars are driving the County streets, causing accidents that result in hit-and-runs because many do not have insurance. The State and the County have a vested interest in determining that vehicles are registered properly to owners who maintain permanent residence within the State of Maryland. The passage of HB1495 will provide Baltimore County with another tool to enforce laws that are important to ensuring the safety of our public streets. Also, the bill does not materially affect State or County operations and finances. This is merely enabling legislation and does not require any course of action. It also places Baltimore County in line with similar proposed Baltimore City legislation - HB332 - which may also pass this session. If HB332 passes and HB1495 does not, then we can assume that Baltimore City drivers with out-of-state tags will begin to park their cars over the jurisdictional border to avoid penalties. For these reasons, I urge you to offer a favorable report on HB1495.