

March 5, 2025

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.  
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings  
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

***RE: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 742 – Vehicle Laws - Inspection Requirement***

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on Senate Bill 742 and offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

SB 742 would require the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) to mandate certain<sup>1</sup> motor vehicles at least six (6) model years old be inspected biennially. An inspection must include examination of certain. Finally, the bill mandates that MVA have a valid inspection certificate on file for the vehicle to allow for its registration renewal; this certificate is valid for 90 days and must contain identifying information for the station where the motor vehicle was inspected and the mechanic who performed the inspection.

On average, there are 2,179,000 vehicle registration renewals per year, which is more than 181,500 registration renewals per month. More than one-third of those renewals are completed within two weeks of the vehicle's registration expiring and 97% of renewals are completed through alternative methods (e.g., online or at a kiosk). The inspection requirement established in SB 742 could delay renewals, preventing customers from completing their registration renewals using alternatives to a branch office visit and resulting in a significant increase in vehicles operating on our roadways with expired registrations.

Additionally, the MVA offers the option of a one-year, two-year, three-year, and one-year with installment payments for vehicle registration. Many of the customers who opt for a one-year registration or the one-year installment plan do so because of financial concerns. SB 742 would add an additional fee to the total cost of registering a customer's vehicle, costs which may be challenging for the customer to incur.

SB 742 exempts Class L vehicles from the biennial inspection requirements. Other special vehicle registration classes exist under the Maryland Vehicle law, including Class D (Low Speed) and Class N (Street Rod) vehicles. The General Assembly may wish to include other special registration classes as exempted from the provisions of this bill; doing so will alter the overall impact MVA customers.

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<sup>1</sup> The provisions of SB 742 do not apply to Class L (Historic) vehicles or a vehicle subject to Title 23, Subtitle 3 of the Maryland Vehicle Law.

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Finally, when reviewing Maryland crash data from 2024, a total of 68,257 vehicle-related crashes were reported. Of these, only 2.9%, or 1,982 vehicle-related crashes, listed a mechanical defect as a contributing factor. Overall, 2,739 vehicles were coded as having mechanical defects. Of those, approximately 700 were model year 2019 or newer.

The Maryland Department of Transportation would be happy to continue the discussion around vehicle inspection standards and issues concerning the creation of a regular inspection standard and respectfully requests that the Committee consider this information when deliberating Senate Bill 742.

Respectfully submitted,

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