

testimony2025sb742.pdf

Uploaded by: Franz Schneiderman

Position: FAV



Auto Consumer Alliance
13900 Laurel Lakes Avenue, Suite 100
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**Testimony to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
SB 742 -- Vehicle Laws-- Inspection Requirement
Position: Favorable**

The Honorable Will Smith
Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Building
Annapolis, MD 21401
cc: Members, Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 5, 2025

Dear Chairman Smith and Committee Members,

I'm a consumer advocate and Executive Director of Consumer Auto, a non-profit group that works for safety, transparency, and fair treatment for Maryland drivers and consumers.

We support **SB 742** because it promises to improve vehicle safety and prevent some of the thousands of crashes on state roads each year caused by vehicle defects. By requiring a mechanical review of key safety systems of cars that are at least six old every two years, the legislation will give drivers an opportunity to fix unsafe brakes, steering systems and other components before they cause someone to get hurt. In in many cases, this will also prevent relatively small issues from growing into much more serious problems that may cost drivers thousands to repair or force them to replace their vehicle earlier than they had planned (which is likely to be even more costly).

With the average vehicle on U.S roads now a record 12.6 years old, and the average passenger car now 14 years old,¹ the safety of older cars, in particular, is certainly a serious public safety concern. Experts estimate that about one in five cars on U.S. roads today – or about 58.1 million cars – carry defects that are serious enough to have prompted a recall but have not been repaired.² And millions more cars are driving on worn brakes or other deteriorated systems that pose safety risks to others on the road.

The Maryland State Police reports that Maryland had 10,127 car crashes caused by vehicle equipment failure between 2017 and 2019. That number represents about 3% of the crashes in Maryland in those years. It also represents tens of thousands of Marylanders put at risk by crashes that could have been prevented with more careful attention to vehicle safety.

The Maryland figures are consistent with data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) that suggest 2 to 7 percent of crashes are caused by equipment defects.

Many factors affect road safety and crash frequency, of course, and it is difficult to establish a direct correlation between vehicle inspections and crash rates. However, the most comprehensive study on the issue I am aware of, a 2015 review of the effectiveness of state vehicle safety

¹ <https://www.caranddriver.com/news/a60882953/average-age-us-cars-trucks-suvs-rises/>

²² <https://www.fox6now.com/news/1-5-vehicles-us-roads-unresolved-recall-how-to-check>



inspections by the General Accounting Office (GAO), did find that the inspections prompt important repairs of many thousands of cars each year in the states that conduct them. Its summary stresses that state officials strongly believe that “inspections help identify vehicles with safety problems and result in repair or removal of unsafe vehicles.”³

The GAO study showed, for instance, that in 2014 about 529,000 vehicles in Pennsylvania (which requires annual safety inspections) underwent repairs to pass inspection.⁴ Virginia (which also requires an annual inspection) reported repair of more than 1.4 million cars – or about 19% of the vehicles in the state – to pass inspection that same year. Those repairs included about 700,000 cars that failed to pass inspection because of deficient brake components.⁵

That finding is important because brake problems can, of course, cause serious danger but -- unlike taillight or other failures that an officer might spot on the road and order a driver to repair – would not in the normal course of events be visible to a driver or a patrol officer. Periodic inspections give qualified mechanics the chance to look for such problems, and fix them before tragedy strikes.

This is part of the reason that most of our neighboring states already require annual or semi-annual vehicle inspections. That list includes Virginia, West Virginia, New York, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Massachusetts, and the District of Columbia. On the other hand, the only other state that joins Maryland in requiring inspections only when a car is sold or transferred is Alabama.

Creating a more robust inspection requirement for older vehicles that are likely to be showing serious wear and tear would improve vehicle safety and very likely reduce the number of crashes caused by mechanical defects across Maryland each year. It would also help extend the useful life of the older vehicles many low- and middle-income drivers rely on by prompting early repairs of potentially serious mechanical issues, before they mushroom into highly expensive repair projects.

We support SB 742 and ask you to give it a FAVORABLE report.

Sincerely,

Franz Schneiderman
Consumer Auto

³ <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-15-705-highlights.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-15-705.pdf>

⁵ Ibid.

SB 742 _ MADA_ fav.pdf

Uploaded by: J Peter Kitzmiller

Position: FAV



DATE: March 5, 2025
TO: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Peter Kitzmiller (President)
RE: SB 742 – Vehicle Laws – Inspection Requirement

The Maryland Automobile Dealers Association (MADA) represents over 300 franchised new car and truck dealers, and their 24,000 employees. We strongly support SB 742.

The Maryland State Police has created one of the best used vehicle safety inspection programs in the country, but this is only required when vehicle ownership is transferred. As the average price tag on new vehicle approaching \$40,000, the average lifespan of a used vehicle is at an all-time high – roughly 12 years. Ensuring the condition of these vehicles should be a public safety priority.

Delaware, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia all require either an annual or biennial inspection. Maryland is currently an outlier for Mid-Atlantic states. Our Maryland franchised dealers often praise the condition of vehicles from our neighboring states with safety inspections when accepting trade-ins. State safety inspections ensure that a vehicle is safe to operate in our communities and helps preserve value and longer life for vehicles. The better condition a vehicle is in also reduces the cost of vehicle repair at turnover too.

SB 742 provides the framework to improve vehicle safety by requiring a biennial inspection for vehicles that are at least 6 model years old. Maryland dealers know that if a safety inspection is not required, many Maryland car owners will decline necessary vehicle. MADA respectfully asks the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to give SB 742 a favorable report.

Oppose SB742.pdf

Uploaded by: J Wilson

Position: UNF

SB742, Vehicle Laws-Inspection Requirement is a tax on the lower & middle classes. Citizens that choose to own an older vehicle typically do so for financial reasons. Requiring citizens to have costly inspections completed is yet another way that lower income Marylanders will have to foot the bills of the State. This requirement will need additional Government staff to manage the program, additional automotive shops to handle the workload, and even more Government staff to oversee the licensing of those additional automotive shops.

The proposed bill creates more Government spending and requires the most financially burdened citizens to pay for it.

Marylanders should not be punished for owning an older vehicle that helps them to live within their means. This is a financial strategy that Maryland Legislators need to learn and adopt.

I respectfully ask you to oppose SB742

SB 742 testimony Judicial proceedings.pdf

Uploaded by: Kirk McCauley

Position: UNF



WMDA/CAR Service Station
and Automotive Repair Association

Chair: William C Smith Jr, Vice Chair, Waldstreicher and Members of Judicial Proceeding Committee

RE: SB742 Vehicle Laws – Inspection Requirements

Position: Unfavorable

My name is Kirk McCauley, my employer is WMDA/CAR, we have represented service stations, convenience stores and repair facilities across the state since 1937 as a non- profit trade group.

While WMDA/CAR is not opposed to a bi-annual inspection, this bill leaves too many unstated regulations, and costs. Vehicle inspection at title change is now by independent inspection locations, including dealerships. Equipment Repair Orders (RO) are now issued by police departments. Automotive Safety Enforcement Division (ASED) oversees all of this.

SB742 lists 10 items to be inspected, but in general terms and no specific regulation, are there enough inspection location, hard to tell unless you know the time allowed for each vehicle, is there a formular for inspection stations verses vehicles to be inspected, what is costs to the state, can a inspection station pay a certified technician enough to do inspections as required with labor cost in the \$125-\$175 per hr. range and some higher.

Consumers are a big consideration with inflation what it is, and I do not see a decent inspection taking less than 1/2 Hour. We don't want selling repairs to supplement salaries, so cost would have be significant.

WMDA/CAR would support this bill going to study with stakeholders, MVA and ASED personnel.

Any questions can be addressed to Kirk McCauley, 301-775-0221 or kmccauley@wmda.net

SB0742 - MVA - LOI - Vehicle Laws - Inspection Req

Uploaded by: Matt Mickler

Position: INFO

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 certain¹ 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.

¹ 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.

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Page Two

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,

Christine E. Nizer
Administrator
Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration
410-787-7830

Matthew Mickler
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090

Maryland State Police Position Paper - SB742.pdf

Uploaded by: Owen Traynor

Position: INFO



State of Maryland
Department of State Police
Government Affairs Section
Annapolis Office (410) 260-6100

POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

DATE: March 5, 2025

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 742

Position: Letter of Information

BILL TITLE: Vehicle Laws – Inspection Requirement

REVIEW AND ANALYSIS:

This legislation seeks to require the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) to require a biennial inspection of a motor vehicle that is at least 6 model years old by an authorized inspection station. The inspection station shall issue an inspection certificate to the administration. This inspection certificate shall demonstrate that a motor vehicle meets or exceeds the equipment standards for equipment established in this legislation. The legislation exempts historic vehicles and vehicles required to be part of a preventive maintenance program.

Under current law, a used motor vehicle shall be inspected by a certified inspection mechanic working at an authorized inspection station prior to the vehicle being registered in this state. Historic vehicles are exempt from this requirement. Maryland only requires an inspection prior to the registration of a used vehicle regardless of age, not annually or biannually. The Department of State Police (DSP) is responsible for the establishment of the statewide inspection program. DSP tests and certifies the inspection mechanics and the stations used for the inspections. The DSP and MVA do not regulate the inspection fees. Inspection certificates expire after 90 days.

The state of Maryland also has a program in place for law enforcement officers to identify and potentially remove unsafe vehicles from the road. It is called the Safety Equipment Repair Order Program. Over 10,000 police officers in this state are able to stop a motor vehicle for any observed equipment violation and issue an order for repair and subsequent inspection. In 2024, there were over 95,000 repair orders issued by police officers. Inspection stations performed over 760,000 full vehicle inspections last year alone.

Regarding the specifics of SB 742, the inspection requirements would apply to over 3.6 million registered vehicles. There are 1,503 inspection stations certified to perform the required inspections. Equal access to inspectors and stations is limited. Western Maryland and the Eastern Shore have fewer stations than the Baltimore/Washington corridor thereby creating an inequitable ability to comply with the law.

In addition to their regular work, each inspection station would have to inspect on average at least 1,190 vehicles per year to ensure that owners can get their vehicles in compliance and renew their vehicle registrations.

The Maryland Department of State Police respectfully requests that the Committee consider this information when deliberating Senate Bill 742.