



BYRON E. MACFARLANE
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February 12, 2026

The Honorable Marc Korman, Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 250
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: House Bill 174 – Motor Vehicles and Marine Vessels – Transfer-on-Death Designations
– FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton and Members of the Committee,

I write to you as Chair of the Legislative Committee of the Maryland Register of Wills Association to express our support for HB174. We respectfully urge a favorable committee report.

Several years ago, our state enacted legislation that allows an individual who is the sole owner of a motor vehicle to designate a transfer-on-death beneficiary on their vehicle title. Upon the owner's passing, this allows that individual's motor vehicle to be transferred to their named beneficiary without the vehicle being included in their probate estate. In some cases, this means the decedent's probate estate will be of lesser value, since their motor vehicle is not included, and in others it may mean the decedent will have no probate estate whatsoever. The ability to bypass probate for solely owned motor vehicles removes one step in the process of selling or transferring these assets after a family loses a loved one, and has tremendous benefit to Maryland vehicle owners.

This legislation builds on the success of existing law and would allow for transfer-on-death beneficiaries for jointly owned motor vehicles along with solely owned or jointly owned vessels. As indicated in the Fiscal Note, the Registers of Wills cannot predict the impact of this bill on probate fees and inheritance tax revenues that we collect (see page 5, first full paragraph under "*General Fund*"). We know there will be some impact on our caseload and revenue. However, we believe that the public interest in allowing more of our state's residents to keep their motor vehicles and vessels out of probate – thereby saving families time, expense, and administrative rigmarole – far outweighs the minimal impact on state government that we anticipate.

It is with the success of current law, the potential benefits of this legislation, and the public interest in mind, first and foremost, that we support and encourage a favorable report on House Bill 174.

Thank you for your time, attention, and consideration for this commonsense measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Byron E. Macfarlane". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Byron E. Macfarlane
Register of Wills