

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 750 (Delegate Fulton)

Commerce and Government Matters

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**Vehicle Laws - Alcohol and Drug-Related Offenses - "DWI" Registration Plates**

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This bill requires the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) to issue "DWI" registration plates to a vehicle owner who has been convicted of driving while intoxicated or while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The special "DWI" plates are valid for a period of two years. The MVA may assess a fee to the owner of the vehicle in order to recover its costs. The owner of the vehicle must continue to register the vehicle as otherwise required by law.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) expenditures could increase by \$53,400 in FY 1999 reflecting the bill's October 1, 1998 effective date and by \$57,000 in FY 2000. Future year expenditures would be approximately \$86,000. Indeterminate increase in TTF expenditures for computer programming. TTF revenues from fees are indeterminate but are expected to completely offset the increased expenditures over time.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Fiscal Analysis**

**State Effect:** TTF expenditures could increase by an estimated \$24,412 in fiscal 1999, which accounts for the bill's October 1, 1998 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one Customer Service Representative to process timely notifications to vehicle owners who have been convicted of drunk or drugged driving. It includes salaries, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses. The information and assumptions used in calculating the estimate are stated below:

- an estimated 9,500 convictions of drunk and drugged driving per year; and
- each convicted driver must be notified by the MVA that current plates must be returned within 30 days of the end of the current registration period.

Salaries and Fringe Benefits	\$19,117
Operating Expenses	<u>5,295</u>
<b>Total FY 1999 State Expenditures</b>	<b>\$24,412</b>

Future year expenditures would be approximately \$28,000 and reflect: (1) full salaries with 3.5% annual increases and 3% employee turnover; and (2) 1% annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

The MVA will be required to design and produce approximately 9,500 sets of special registration plates at a cost of \$3.05 per set. Accordingly, TTF expenditures would increase by about \$29,000 annually. After the first two-year cycle, MVA will be required to reissue regular registration plates for those individuals returning the special registration plates. This would increase expenditures by an additional \$29,000 each year beginning in fiscal 2001.

The MVA advises that computer programming expenditures could increase by an estimated \$50,000 to modify the computer programs as proposed in this legislation. The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) advises that if other legislation is passed requiring computer reprogramming changes, economies of scale could be realized. This would reduce computer programming costs associated with this bill and other legislation affecting the MVA system. Further, DLS advises that the increased computer expenditure is simply an estimate and the MVA may be able to handle the changes with either less money than it estimates or existing resources.

The bill requires that the owner of a vehicle who is assigned the special registration tags pay a fee to the MVA. The MVA must set the fee at a level which will allow it to recover its costs. It is unknown at what level the MVA will set the fee. However, there is currently a \$20 fee for the Chesapeake Bay commemorative plate, from which the MVA retains \$8 for cost recovery. It is assumed the fee for the special "DWI" registration plates would be set at a similar level. Therefore, any costs for the MVA associated with this legislation will be mitigated by the fee.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Transportation (Motor Vehicle Administration),  
Judiciary (District Court of Maryland), Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 25, 1998

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