

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
1999 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 849 (Delegate Benson)

Commerce and Government Matters

Motor Vehicle Administration - Special Registration Plates

This bill requires the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) to administer a special registration plate program for individuals with hearing or speech sensory disabilities or language impairments. Special registrations and plates may only be issued if a licensed physician certifies that the applicant has a sensory disability or language impairment. No fee may be charged to the applicant other than the annual registration fee. Recipients of the special registration plates are not entitled to the parking privileges afforded to individuals with disabilities.

A person may not commit fraud or make any misrepresentations in applying for or using the special registration plates. The recipient of the special registration plates must have possession of the application for the plates approved by the MVA while driving. Any violations of these provisions are misdemeanors under the Motor Vehicle Law.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Indeterminate increase in Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) expenditures. Indeterminate general fund revenue increase from the penalty provision applicable to this offense under the Maryland Vehicle Law (maximum \$500 fine). Any increase is assumed to be minimal.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Fiscal Analysis

State Expenditures: According to the Governor's Office for Individuals with Disabilities, 293,100 Marylanders have difficulties with hearing or speaking. It is unknown what proportion of this population are vehicle owners or how many would qualify for the specialty plates. Further, the level of interest that could be generated by this type of special registration plates cannot be reliably estimated at this time.

Based on current workloads of the MVA and the application for other specialty plates, it is estimated that one customer service representative could process 6,250 applications annually. Should the number of applications for the special registration plate reach this level, the MVA would require an additional employee at an approximate cost of \$28,000 annually. Additional costs would be incurred to replace existing plates with plates denoting the owner's disability, approximately \$4 per set of plates.

The MVA advises that computer programming expenditures could increase by an estimated \$20,000 to modify the computer programs to create a new tag series. 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.

State Revenues: The MVA will generate no revenue from this specialty plate program as the bill prohibits MVA from charging any additional fees to mitigate costs associated with issuing the special registration plates.

General fund revenue may increase minimally from fines associated with violating the application or driving provisions of this bill.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Transportation (Motor Vehicle Administration), Governor's Office for Individuals with Disabilities, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 7, 1999

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Analysis by: Jody J. Minnich

Direct Inquiries to:
John Rixey, Coordinating Analyst
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510