

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2005 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 562 (Senator Ruben, *et al.*)
Judicial Proceedings

Task Force on Periodic Vehicle Safety Inspections

This bill establishes the Task Force on Periodic Vehicle Safety Inspections. The task force is charged with considering the costs and benefits of periodic vehicle safety inspections for the State, how such inspections should be enforced and conducted, and the vehicle inspection laws of other states. The task force must make specific recommendations and develop draft legislation and regulations concerning periodic vehicle safety inspections by December 31, 2005. The Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) is required to provide staffing for the task force.

The bill is effective June 1, 2005 and terminates on December 31, 2005.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any expense reimbursements for task force members are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing resources. Staffing could also be provided within existing resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Generally, if a person transfers a used motor vehicle, the person must obtain an inspection certificate from an inspection station. The inspection certificate is to be attached to the window of the vehicle. The inspection requirement does not apply to transfers between spouses, parents and children, vehicle co-owners, or vehicles that are

not to be both titled and registered in Maryland. The inspection requirement also does not apply to other specialized types of transfers, as specified in statute.

A valid inspection certificate for a used vehicle is required for titling and registration. An inspection certificate is valid from the date of the inspection certificate for a period of 90 days. An inspection certificate issued for a used vehicle owned and held in inventory by a licensed dealer expires at the earlier of six months or after 1,000 miles has been added to the vehicle's odometer since issuance of the inspection certificate.

If a person applies for titling and registration of a used vehicle, the MVA may issue a temporary registration and withhold delivery of the certificate of title until an inspection certificate is received. A vehicle with a temporary registration must be inspected within 60 days of the issuance of the temporary registration.

Background: According to the latest survey of the Automotive Service Association, 18 states and the District of Columbia require inspections of passenger cars on a periodic basis (Delaware, Hawaii, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia). Inspection fees vary, as does the proportion of the fee kept by the inspection stations for performing inspections.

All these states require annual safety inspections except New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Utah. In the first five years of ownership, Utah requires safety inspections biennially, then, the inspections are required annually. The District of Columbia also requires inspections on a biennial basis. Most states test for emissions and safety at the same time. The dual testing does not occur in the District of Columbia and portions of Maine, Texas, and Virginia and the states of Hawaii, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, Utah, and West Virginia. In New York, dual testing is available for an additional fee.

State Expenditures: The MVA advises that 80 staff hours would be needed to meet the bill's requirements and that a consultant at a cost of \$12,000 could be necessary to provide the information required by the bill. The Department of Legislative Services advises, however, that the MVA could meet the bill's requirements with existing resources.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 1257 (Delegate Malone) – Environmental Matters.

Information Source(s): Collision Repair Industry Insight, Automotive Service Association, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 8, 2005
ncs/jr

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