

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2006 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 1585

(Delegate Bartlett, *et al.*)

Environmental Matters

Judicial Proceedings

Vehicle Laws - Drivers of Motor Homes - Driver Licensing Requirements

This bill permits an individual with a Class C (noncommercial) driver's license to drive a motor home with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 26,001 pounds or more. In addition, the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) must study specified issues related to licensing of the drivers of motor homes, including but not limited to training, testing, and requiring a special motor home endorsement for drivers. The MVA must report to the General Assembly on these issues by December 31, 2006.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2006 and terminates May 31, 2007.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) revenues and expenditures could decrease minimally in FY 2006 and 2007 only due to reduced numbers of Class B (noncommercial) driver's licenses issued. Potential decrease in general fund revenues in FY 2006 and 2007 only from a decrease in penalty revenues collected under the Maryland Vehicle Law.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: An individual with a Class C (noncommercial) license may drive any vehicle or any combination of vehicles with a GVWR of 26,001 pounds or less except for

commercial motor vehicles and motorcycles. An individual with a Class B (noncommercial) driver's license may drive any single vehicle or combinations of vehicles with a GVWR or gross combination weight rating of 26,001 pounds or more, except for commercial motor vehicles, motorcycles, and combinations of Class F (tractor) and Class G (trailer) vehicles.

A "motor home" is defined as a motor vehicle that is designed and constructed primarily to provide living quarters for recreational, camping, or travel use. This does not include a travel trailer – which is designed to be towed behind another vehicle. By regulation, a motor home is further defined as a vehicle built into as an integral part of, or permanently attached to, a self-propelled motor vehicle chassis or van, and that contains four of several permanently installed specified life support systems such as a potable water supply with a faucet and a sink, a toilet, or cooking facilities.

An individual may not drive or attempt to drive a motor vehicle on any highway in Maryland unless the individual holds a Maryland driver's license, the individual is expressly exempt from licensing requirements, or the individual is specifically authorized to drive vehicles of the class that the individual was driving or attempting to drive. A violation of this offense is considered a misdemeanor and is subject to a maximum \$500 fine and an assessment of two points on the driver's license.

Background: Hundreds of thousands of Americans vacation or travel in recreational vehicles and motor homes annually. These vehicles can cost upwards of \$1 million, and are equipped with features such as waterbeds, plasma televisions, washer and dryers, and satellite dishes. Many of these vehicles have a GVWR of 26,001 pounds or more.

Approximately 13 states, not including Maryland, have specialized licensing requirements for motor home operators based on either weight or length; of these, 12 have requirements for motor homes with a GVWR of over 26,000 pounds. California requires a Class B (noncommercial) license with a motor home endorsement and a medical questionnaire if the motor home is longer than 40 feet.

The MVA requires a specialized road test for a Class B (noncommercial) license, including a pre-test inspection of the vehicle. In addition, the MVA charges \$50 to receive a Class B (noncommercial) learner's permit, and upgrade to a Class B (noncommercial) driver's license.

The MVA advises that, as of February 21, 2006, there were no motor homes weighing over 26,000 pounds registered in the State; however, as larger motor homes are becoming more popular, it is likely that in the future, motor homes weighing over 26,001 pounds will be purchased and registered in Maryland.

State Effect: TTF revenues and expenditures could decrease minimally in fiscal 2006 and 2007 from individuals no longer seeking a Class B (noncommercial) license as opposed to a Class C (noncommercial) license. The number of individuals no longer seeking a Class B (noncommercial) license cannot be reliably estimated at this time. The requirements of the study could be handled with existing resources.

General fund revenues could decrease minimally from penalty revenues for citations issued to individuals driving a motor home with a GVWR in excess of 26,001 pounds on a class C (noncommercial) driver's license. According to the Administrative Office of the Courts, 178 tickets were issued for any driving of a nonauthorized vehicle with a Class C (noncommercial) driver's license in fiscal 2005. The District Court prepayable fine for this offense is \$280. The Administrative Office of the Courts was unable to determine how many of the 178 tickets were for driving a motor home with a GVWR above 26,001 pounds and how many were for other types of violations such as riding a motorcycle or driving a commercial vehicle.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Transportation, Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Family Motor Coach Association, Department of Legislative Services

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