

Department of Legislative Services  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2006 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
 Revised

House Bill 1559 (Delegate Sossi, *et al.*)

Environmental Matters

Judicial Proceedings

Vehicle Laws - Weight Violations on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge - Penalties

This bill doubles the fine for certain overweight vehicles on the William Preston Lane, Jr. Memorial Bridge (Chesapeake Bay Bridge) from the standard overweight vehicle fine in effect on all highways.

Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** General fund revenues would increase by \$49,300 in FY 2007 due to increased fine revenue. Future year estimates include annualization and a 1% increase in the number of overweight vehicles fined. Expenditures would not be affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
GF Revenue	\$49,300	\$66,500	\$67,100	\$67,800	\$68,500
Expenditure	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Effect	\$49,300	\$66,500	\$67,100	\$67,800	\$68,500

*Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate effect*

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The fine for each additional pound over 2,000 pounds of excess weight but less than 5,001 pounds is doubled to 10 cents. The fine for each additional pound over 5,000 pounds excess weight but less than 10,001 pounds is doubled to 24 cents. The fine for each additional pound over 10,000 pounds excess weight but less than 20,001

pounds is doubled to 40 cents, and the fine for each pound of excess weight over 20,000 pounds is doubled to 80 cents.

**Exhibit 1** shows the difference between the current fine schedule and the proposed fine schedule under the bill.

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**Exhibit 1**  
**Fine Schedule by Number of Pounds Overweight**

<u>Pounds Overweight</u>	<u>Proposed Fines</u>	<u>Current Fines</u>	<u>Difference</u>
First 0 – 1,000	\$0.01	\$0.01	\$0.00
Additional 1,001 – 2,000	\$0.05	\$0.05	\$0.00
Additional 2,001 – 5,000	\$0.10	\$0.05	\$0.05
Additional 5,001 – 10,000	\$0.24	\$0.12	\$0.12
Additional 10,001 – 20,000	\$0.40	\$0.20	\$0.20
Additional Over 20,000	\$0.80	\$0.40	\$0.40

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The Maryland Department of Transportation must report to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee and the House Environmental Matters Committee by December 1, 2007, on the number of overweight vehicles fined on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge between October 1, 2005 and September 30, 2006 and between October 1, 2006 and September 30, 2007, and the number of vehicles fined for weight restrictions at each other MdTA facility during those time periods.

**Current Law:** Weight limits may be imposed for highways by statute or by sign. Also, there is a maximum weight limit for each class of vehicle or combination (*i.e.*, tow vehicle and trailer) registered with the Motor Vehicle Administration. A vehicle or combination that violates a weight limit, or commits a weight violation on a State highway, including interstates, is subject to a fine. Revenues from the fines are committed to the general fund.

**Background:** The Chesapeake Bay Bridge, built in 1952, connects Maryland's Eastern Shore recreational regions with the metropolitan areas of Baltimore, Annapolis, and the District of Columbia. More than 25 million vehicles crossed the bridge in 2003. The Maryland Transportation Authority (MdTA) has recently spent \$52 million on reconstruction of the westbound span of the bridge and will spend an additional \$57.5 million through fiscal 2009. Overweight vehicles add to the deterioration of the bridge.

The Chesapeake Bay Bridge is part of the US 301 corridor, an alternative to taking Interstate 95 north or south. US 301 runs from Bradenton, Florida, to Glasgow, Delaware. MdTA advises that it suspects that some commercial vehicle operators, traveling with overweight loads, are taking US 301 in order to avoid the weigh stations on Interstate 95. MdTA advises that the current fines along the bridge appear to be low enough not to deter such behavior. A recent sample shows that approximately 2.5% of all vehicles traveling over the Chesapeake Bay Bridge are overweight, as opposed to approximately 2% at other MdTA facilities.

**State Fiscal Effect:** General fund revenues could increase by \$49,348 in fiscal 2007, accounting for the bill's October 1 effective date, and by \$66,455 in fiscal 2008. This fine revenue would increase to \$68,469 by fiscal 2011. This estimate is based on the following assumptions:

- In fiscal 2007, the number and types of overweight vehicles stay constant at calendar 2005 levels (548).
- Thereafter, overweight vehicle traffic caught traveling over the Bay Bridge increases by 1% annually.

**Exhibit 2** shows the number of vehicles in each weight category that were fined in calendar 2005 for traveling overweight on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and the amount of fine revenue that would have been generated under the bill as opposed to current revenues.

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**Exhibit 2**  
**Calendar 2005 Fine Revenue Generated by Overweight Vehicles by Weight Class**

<u>Weight Class</u> <u>(pounds overweight)</u>	<u>Number of</u> <u>Vehicles</u>	<u>Proposed Fines</u> <u>under Bill</u>	<u>Fines under</u> <u>Current Fine</u> <u>Schedule</u>	<u>Revenue</u> <u>Effect</u>
1 – 1,000	24	\$182	\$182	\$0
1,001 – 2,000	221	\$7,581	\$7,581	\$0
2,001 – 5,000	214	\$38,152	\$25,496	\$12,656
5,001 – 10,000	73	\$57,638	\$31,009	\$26,629
10,001 – 20,000	15	\$45,736	\$23,318	\$22,418
Over 20,000	1	\$8,248	\$4,154	\$4,094
<b>Total</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>\$157,537</b>	<b>\$91,740</b>	<b>\$65,797</b>

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As MdTA already tracks fine revenue for overweight vehicles, reporting requirements could be handled with existing resources.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** SB 168 (Senators Pipkin and Astle) – Judicial Proceedings.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 7, 2006  
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