

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2008 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 962

(Delegate F. Turner, *et al.*)

Environmental Matters

Vehicle Laws - Driver's License Renewal - Vision Testing

This bill repeals the requirement that an individual between the ages of 21 and 39, inclusive, who applies for renewal of a driver's license electronically or by mail must have passed a vision test authorized by the Motor Vehicle Administration within the previous six years. Thus, such an individual could apply for renewal electronically or by mail without taking a vision test.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The requirements imposed under this bill could be handled by MVA with existing resources. Revenues would not be affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Every individual applying for renewal of a driver's license is required to pass a vision test as prescribed by MVA unless • MVA has received a certification of acceptable visual acuity from a licensed physician or optometrist within 12 months of renewal; or • the individual is between the age of 21 and 39, inclusive, is applying for renewal electronically or by mail, and has passed a vision test authorized by MVA within the previous six years.

If MVA has reason to believe that an individual is a safety hazard by reason of a vision deficiency, it may require a vision test at a time other than for a driver's license renewal.

Background: Maryland and nine other states including Virginia and the District of Columbia require driver's license applicants to pass a vision test. Thirty states have enacted special driver's licensing procedures for drivers above a certain age. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, Maryland Vehicle Law is unique in that it requires a vision test for driver's license applicants of a certain age while also specifying that age alone is not grounds for reexamination of drivers.

State Fiscal Effect: MVA advises that this bill could require computer reprogramming work costing up to \$9,000. Legislative Services advises that this work could likely be accomplished with existing resources, and in any event, if other legislation is passed requiring computer reprogramming changes, economies of scale could be realized. This would reduce the cost associated with this bill and other legislation affecting the MVA system.

Legislative Services also notes that, since the bill would allow additional individuals to renew electronically or by mail, the bill could result in increased operational efficiencies.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): National Conference of State Legislatures, Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 5, 2008
mll/ljm

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