

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2009 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 656 (Delegate Boteler, *et al.*)
Environmental Matters

State Highway Administration - Emergency Snow Removal - Use of Farm Trucks

This bill authorizes the State Highway Administration (SHA), within the Maryland Department of Transportation, to hire an owner of a registered farm truck for snow removal services when a statewide or local emergency is declared. SHA may adopt regulations to implement the bill.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill does not increase the total amount spent by SHA on snow removal services, assuming that farmers are paid the same hourly rate as the private contractors currently hired for such services.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal for farmers who are small businesses and receive payment for snow removal.

Analysis

Current Law: A farm truck is a Class E truck vehicle, with a shipping weight of its chassis and battery, as certified by the manufacturer, of more than 0.75 tons. Any applicant who certifies that he/she is a farmer and specifies its proposed use is entitled to a Class E farm truck registration. The annual registration fee paid is based on the maximum gross vehicle weight and ranges from \$5.00 to \$5.25 per 1,000 pounds. Farm trucks can only be used for hire to haul farm products for another farmer.

SHA is directed, among other things, to keep all State highways reasonably clear of snow.

Background: In fiscal 2008, SHA had \$46.4 million in winter maintenance expenditures. Of this amount, \$14.2 million was for contractor payments to aid in snow removal. These contracts run from November 15 to April 30. SHA currently pays \$95 to \$175 per hour for a dump truck and \$150 to \$180 per hour for a loader. The Governor's proposed fiscal 2010 budget includes \$21.0 million for winter maintenance expenditures.

At the end of fiscal 2008, there were 27,993 actively registered farm trucks in the State.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: Similar legislation was introduced as SB 939 of 2008. The Finance Committee held a hearing on the bill, but no further action was taken.

Cross File: None designated; however, SB 209 is similar.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 19, 2009
mlm/ljm

Analysis by: Amanda Mock

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510