

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2009 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 678 (Delegate Malone)
Environmental Matters

Motor Vehicles - Television-Type Receiving Equipment - Operation

This bill prohibits driving while operating television-type receiving equipment visible to the driver. The bill exempts the use of such equipment (1) in conjunction with mapping systems; (2) in conjunction with weather information systems; (3) to provide information related to the condition of the vehicle; (4) to enhance the driver's view of the highway; or (5) to assist the driver in detecting objects in the highway.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund revenues may decrease minimally to the extent that fewer fines are collected by the District Court as a result of the bill narrowing applicability of the current offense. Enforcement can be handled with existing resources.

Local Effect: Enforcement can be handled with existing resources

Small Business Effect: Potential minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: A motor vehicle driven on a highway in Maryland may not be *equipped* with television-type receiving equipment in front of the back of the driver's seat or otherwise visible to the driver. Exempted from this prohibition are: (1) vehicles used exclusively for safety or law enforcement purposes; (2) equipment used for alphanumeric data and text transmission; and (3) navigation systems with picture display.

Background: Many states prohibit the operation of televisions within the view of drivers. Since 2005, seven states (Alaska, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, Tennessee,

Texas, and Virginia) have enacted prohibitions to include other types of video displays, with some of these states also providing specific exemptions for visual displays that assist with navigation, parking, or safe driving.

State Revenues: General fund revenues may decrease minimally to the extent that there are fewer violations of the provision of the vehicle law amended by the bill. It is expected that the number of violations decrease slightly because the bill alters the prohibition from equipping a vehicle with television-type receiving equipment to *operating* the equipment while driving. In addition, the bill exempts additional types of video equipment. The misdemeanor for equipping a vehicle with television-type receiving equipment is punishable by a fine of up to \$500. However, the current prepayment fine charged by the District Court for this violation is \$50. The average number of violations of this provision over the last three fiscal years is 88. If the District Court penalty established for a violation of the bill is maintained at \$50, and there are fewer violations, then general fund revenues decrease minimally, and in any event by no more than \$4,400.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): National Conference of State Legislatures, Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of State Police, Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 20, 2009
mlm/ljm

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