

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2010 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 45

(Senator Haines)

Judicial Proceedings

Environmental Matters

Motor Vehicles - Registration Plates - "Home of Our National Anthem"

This bill requires certain vehicle registration plates manufactured on or after October 1, 2010, to display the words "Home of Our National Anthem." Exempted are certain special registration plates including the Chesapeake Bay, Maryland Agriculture, and combat-related Armed Forces plates.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Transportation Trust Fund expenditures may increase minimally to the extent that the bill cannot be implemented by the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) with existing budgeted resources. The bill exempts most, but not all, special registration plates from the bill's design requirements; thus, some special registration plates may require significant redesign in order to accommodate the phrase "Home of Our National Anthem" in addition to other features required by current law.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Vehicle registration plates must display the registration number assigned to the vehicle and the word "Maryland," which may be abbreviated. Registration numbers may consist of letters, numerals, or both.

Background: As of January 2010, Maryland was one of five states that issue a standard registration plate displaying a state web site. Of the other 45 states, 33 issue standard

registration plates with a state motto or slogan, and 12 states have no motto, slogan, or web site. Maryland last displayed a slogan on its standard issue registration plates during the mid-1980s for the 350th anniversary of the State's founding as a colony.

In response to the upcoming 200th anniversary of the War of 1812 and the important role of Fort McHenry in the Battle of Baltimore, the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) has finalized all inventory and design preparations with the Maryland Correctional Enterprises for tag rollout of a new standard issue plate that will feature the Star-Spangled Banner flying over Fort McHenry as bombs burst in the air and "War of 1812" displayed below the State's name. MDOT expects that the new plate will be available summer 2010 and will run through 2015.

State Expenditures: MVA advises that adding words to the standard issue registration plate does not require a redesign of the type that would cause a fiscal impact, particularly since the bill applies to registration plates manufactured on or after October 1, 2010; this assumes that the phrase "Home of Our National Anthem" can fit between the bolt holes on the license plate. However, as noted, some special registration plates are not exempted from the bill's design requirements, and may require significant redesign to comply with the bill. This will likely impose a significant additional operational burden on MVA and expenditures may increase to accomplish this work by the bill's effective date.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Transportation, Automobile License Plate Collectors Association, Department of Legislative Services

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