

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2011 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 310 (Delegate Frush)
Environmental Matters

Motor Vehicles - Registration Plate Covers

This bill alters the prohibition on the sale or advertisement of registration plate covers to allow clear plate covers to be advertised and sold, while clarifying that any tinted, colored, marked, or illuminated cover is prohibited if it functions to obscure or block any of the characters on the plate or distort a recorded image of the characters.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill pertains primarily to private-sector activities. However, to the extent that the bill results in an increase in the number of registration plate covers that are able to avoid being recorded by automated speed monitoring and other traffic enforcement systems, Transportation Trust Fund and other special fund revenues may decrease minimally for the Maryland Department of Transportation, and the Department of State Police (DSP). Enforcement of the bill can be handled by DSP with existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: Local government revenues for jurisdictions with automated speed monitoring and other traffic enforcement systems may decrease minimally. Enforcement can likely be handled with existing budgeted resources.

Small Business Effect: Potential minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: A person may not sell, offer for sale, or advertise for the purpose of promoting the sale of a “registration plate cover.” A registration plate cover is defined as a tinted, colored, painted, marked, clear, or illuminated object that is designed to cover

any characters of the vehicle's registration plate, or distort an image of any of the characters recorded by a traffic control signal monitoring system.

Background: While some companies sell registration plate covers that are designed to protect the plate from dirt and damage, other plates are also sold specifically for the purpose of obscuring the characters on the plate from traffic control signal and speed monitoring cameras placed above the roadway. Some of these registration plate covers are clear and are transparent except when viewed from certain angles that are consistent with the height from which automated traffic enforcement cameras are typically placed.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Harford, Montgomery, Talbot, and Wicomico counties; Baltimore City; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of State Police; Department of Legislative Services

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