

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2012 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 251
Judiciary

(Delegates McDermott and Conway)

Finance

Town of Ocean City - Criminal History Records Check - Taxi Driver Applicants

This bill authorizes the Ocean City Police Department to request State and national criminal history records checks for each taxi driver applicant. The records checks are confidential, may not be re-disseminated, and may only be used for the employment purpose authorized under the bill. The records check applications must be made to the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) Central Repository by forwarding two complete sets of the applicant's fingerprints to the Central Repository. Under the bill, the fees for each records check application are borne by the Ocean City Police Department.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The Central Repository can handle the bill's authorizations with existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: Ocean City expenditures will increase by approximately \$13,200 annually. Local revenues are not directly affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Similar statutory authority does not currently exist for any municipality in the State.

The Public Service Commission regulates taxicabs in four jurisdictions: Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Hagerstown, and Cumberland. Taxi drivers in those jurisdictions are required to provide a criminal history records check.

The following jurisdictions have their own division that licenses taxicab companies – Anne Arundel (City of Annapolis), Carroll (City of Westminster), Frederick (City of Frederick), Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George’s, and Worcester (Town of Ocean City) counties. In counties where there are only a few taxicabs, there is no licensing requirement, though local law enforcement may have some oversight role.

Local Fiscal Effect: Ocean City has 243 taxi drivers currently licensed. License renewals occur annually, and the current private method of background checks takes about eight weeks, which causes the city to issue some number of temporary licenses for the busy summer season.

Under the bill, the total cost for each CJIS criminal history records check and fingerprinting is \$54.50, which includes State and national background checks. Assuming that the Ocean City Police Department exercises the authority granted under the bill, local expenditures will increase by \$13,244 per year, reflecting the cost for 243 new and renewal taxi driver applicants.

While the bill does not directly affect revenues, licensing fees for taxi drivers in Ocean City are currently set by the mayor and town council. These fees can be increased by the mayor and town council to cover additional costs relating to the licensing of taxi drivers. The annual business license fee for a taxi or limousine business is \$300, regardless of the number of vehicles operated by the business. There is an annual taxi medallion renewal fee of \$500 for each vehicle in operation. Medallions can be sold by the owner, and the town gets 25% or \$500, whichever is greater, from those sales transactions. There are other minor fees related to vehicle inspections and fingerprinting.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 374 (Senator Mathias) - Finance.

Information Source(s): Town of Ocean City, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Department of Legislative Services

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mc/hlb

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