

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2012 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 683 (Delegate Simmons)
Environmental Matters

Electric Vehicles - Use of High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes - Reciprocity with Virginia

This bill authorizes electric vehicles registered in Virginia that qualify to use high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes in Virginia to also use HOV lanes in Maryland and requires the State Highway Administration (SHA) to adopt regulations to implement the bill.

The bill is contingent on passage of similar reciprocal legislation in Virginia.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Transportation Trust Fund expenditures increase by about \$20,000 in whichever year the bill takes effect for SHA to produce and install new signs reflecting the bill's authorization. The regulatory development work required by the bill and any enforcement of the bill are assumed to be handled with existing resources.

Local Effect: The bill is not anticipated to materially affect local operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: Chapters 491 and 492 of 2010 authorize a "plug-in vehicle" affixed with an applicable State permit to use HOV lanes, regardless of the number of passengers in the vehicle. The Motor Vehicle Administration now issues a Plug-in Electric HOV Permit for no fee.

A “plug-in vehicle” is an unmodified vehicle of no more than 8,500 pounds, manufactured primarily for use on public roads and highways, with a maximum speed capability of at least 65 miles per hour and a rechargeable battery with a capacity of at least 2.5 kilowatt hours for a vehicle with two or three wheels, and at least 4 kilowatt hours for a vehicle with four wheels. The battery must be capable of being recharged from an external source of electricity. An “HOV lane” is as a lane that is restricted by a traffic control device (such as a sign) during specific times to vehicles carrying at least a specified number of occupants.

In Virginia, a vehicle that displays “clean fuel license plates” may use HOV lanes regardless of the number of passengers. Electric vehicles are eligible to receive clean fuel license plates. Vehicles registered in Maryland are not eligible for clean fuel license plates and, therefore, are not eligible to use HOV lanes solely on the basis of being an electric vehicle.

The Department of Legislative Services advises that it is not aware of any similar reciprocal legislation pending before the Virginia General Assembly at this time.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

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ncs/ljm

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