

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2012 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 1409 (Delegates Clagett and Schulz)
Environmental Matters

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

This bill requires certain vehicle registration plates manufactured on or after October 1, 2012, 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 in FY 2013 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: In response to the two-hundredth 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 begun issuing a new standard issue plate that features the Star-Spangled Banner flying over Fort McHenry as bombs burst in the air and “War of 1812” displayed below the State’s name. According to MVA, the new license plate was created and designed by the War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission to commemorate the State’s history and unique contributions to the defense and heritage of the nation, including the pivotal clash that ensured American victory, an iconic flag, and our national anthem, the “Star-Spangled Banner.” MDOT expects that the new plate will be available through June 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, 2012; 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 they may require significant redesign to comply with the bill. This will likely impose an additional operational burden on MVA.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: SB 45 of 2010 passed in the Senate and received a hearing in the House Environmental Matters Committee, but no further action was taken on it.

Cross File: SB 714 (Senator Kittleman, *et al.*) - Judicial Proceedings.

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

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mc/ljm

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