

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2013 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 566

(Senator Brinkley)

Judicial Proceedings

Rules and Executive Nominations

Vehicle Laws - Unregistered Emergency Vehicles - Operating on Highways

This bill permits a local authority, in exercising local police powers, to authorize an emergency vehicle not subject to registration to operate on a highway while performing an “emergency service” as defined in the Maryland Vehicle Law.

Fiscal Summary

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

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

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: Each motor vehicle, trailer, semitrailer, and pole trailer driven on a highway must be registered. A “motor vehicle” is defined as a vehicle that, unless otherwise specifically exempted, is self-propelled or propelled by electric power obtained from overhead electrical wires and not operated on rails. Certain motor vehicles are specifically exempt from this requirement, including specified snowmobiles in Garrett County and certain golf carts in Allegany County and on Smith Island. Additionally, the Maryland Vehicle Law does not prevent a local authority, in exercising its police power, from regulating, prohibiting, or authorizing specified activities, including allowing specified vehicle types on highways under certain conditions.

Certain vehicles, such as low-speed vehicles, bicycles, and motor scooters, are restricted to certain highways based on the maximum posted speed limit and may be subject to different rules of the road than passenger cars and trucks.

“Emergency service” is defined, for purposes of exempting the operator of an emergency vehicle from liability, as (1) responding to an emergency call; (2) pursuing a violator or suspected violator of the law; or (3) responding to, but not returning from, a fire alarm.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: Although designated as a cross file, HB 680 (Delegate Hogan, *et al.* - Environmental Matters) is not identical.

Information Source(s): Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Harford, Montgomery, Queen Anne’s, and St. Mary’s counties; Department of Natural Resources; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 18, 2013
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