

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2022 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 475 (St. Mary's County Delegation)
Environment and Transportation

St. Mary's County - Motor Vehicle Registration - Exception for Golf Carts

This bill authorizes the St. Mary’s County Board of Commissioners to designate certain county highways on which a person may operate a golf cart. The maximum posted speed limit of any designated highway must not exceed 35 miles per hour. A person who operates a golf cart on a designated highway may do so only (1) between dawn and dusk and (2) if the golf cart is equipped with approved lighting devices. The golf cart must be kept as far to the right of the roadway as feasible, and the driver must have a valid driver’s license.

A golf cart operating pursuant to the bill’s authorization is exempt from the general requirement that each motor vehicle driven on a highway in the State be registered. In addition, the bill does not apply in Golden Beach Patuxent Knolls, for which the operation of golf carts is governed under a separate provision of State law. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2022.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill does not materially affect State finances or operations.

Local Effect: The bill does not materially affect local finances or operations.

Small Business Effect: Potential minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: Each motor vehicle, trailer, semitrailer, and pole trailer driven on a highway must be registered. Certain motor vehicles are exempt from this requirement, including certain snowmobiles in Allegany and Garrett counties and certain golf carts in

Allegany County, on Smith Island, in the City of Crisfield in Somerset County, in the community of Golden Beach Patuxent Knolls in St. Mary's County, and in the Town of Vienna in Dorchester County.

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

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 863 of 2021, a similar bill, received a hearing in the House Environment and Transportation Committee, but no further action was taken.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): St. Mary's County; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 21, 2022
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Analysis by: Eric F. Pierce

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510