

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2023 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Third Reader - Revised**

House Bill 219

(St. Mary's County Delegation\*)

Environment and Transportation

Judicial Proceedings

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**St. Mary's County - Golf Carts on Public Highways - Report**

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This bill requires the St. Mary's County Board of County Commissioners to produce a report recommending and describing the areas of St. Mary's County that the board considers appropriate for the operation of unregistered golf carts on public highways, subject to specified standards. The report must include a detailed map of any areas the board considers appropriate for the operation of unregistered golf carts on public highways, including a delineation of all public highways contained within the area. By December 1, 2023, the board must submit the report to the House Environment and Transportation Committee, the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, and the St. Mary's County Delegation to the General Assembly. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2023.**

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None.

**Local Effect:** The St. Mary's County Board of County Commissioners can produce and submit the required report with existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Bill Summary:** An area appropriate for the operation of golf carts on public highways must:

- be an isolated area on an island or a peninsula bordering the Chesapeake Bay or its tidal tributaries;
- have available significant public or private docking facilities available to the public that would facilitate visitors to the area arriving by boat;
- be viable as a destination for the boating public as part of a network of tourist attractions throughout the Maryland portion of the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries;
- have available for visitors shopping, sightseeing, dining, charter fishing, beaches, pools, or water parks, or other attractions; and
- preferably contain no State highways or highways with a speed limit that exceeds 30 miles per hour.

**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, in the Town of Vienna in Dorchester County, and on Hoopers Island and Taylors Island.

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.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

**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 14, 2023  
km/lgc Third Reader - March 28, 2023  
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