

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Enrolled - Revised

House Bill 43

(Delegate Stewart, *et al.*)

Environment and Transportation

Judicial Proceedings

Motor Vehicle Registration - Exceptions for Golf Carts - Authorization

This bill authorizes a person to operate a golf cart equipped with approved lighting on county or municipal highways between dawn and dusk if the maximum posted speed limit does not exceed 30 miles per hour. 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. The governing body of a county or municipality may designate the highways under their respective jurisdictions on which a golf cart may be operated. The bill's statewide authorization replaces similar authorizations that only apply in certain jurisdictions (Smith Island, the community of Golden Beach Patuxent Knolls in St. Mary's County, the Town of Vienna in Dorchester County, Hoopers Island or Taylors Island, and the City of Crisfield in Somerset County). Under the bill, the operation of a golf cart on Smith Island *between dusk and dawn* is prohibited. The operation of golf carts in the community of Golden Beach Patuxent Knolls on highways on which the maximum posted speed limit does not exceed 35 miles per hour is expressly authorized under the bill, consistent with current statutory provisions.

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: 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, 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.

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: SB 316 (Senator Bailey) - Judicial Proceedings.

Information Source(s): Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Queen Anne's, and St. Mary's counties; cities of College Park, Frostburg, and Rockville; Town of Bladensburg; Department of State Police; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 28, 2024
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