

SB315
Vehicle Laws - Plug-In Electric Drive Vehicles - Reserved Parking Spaces
Favorable with Amendment

Testimony of Joel Hurewitz
Columbia, MD
January 27, 2021

Amendments are needed to have a simpler definition for “plug-in electric drive vehicle.” The definition which was generally written for purposes of tax credits has unintended consequences and is difficult to enforce without determining the specifications of certain vehicles. More importantly, the definition has unintended consequences which will actually prohibit the use of low speed electric vehicles and heavy duty electric trucks—the exact opposite intent of the bill.

In July 2020, Governor Hogan in July 2020 signed the “Multi-State Medium and Heavy Duty Zero Emission Vehicle Memorandum of Understanding.” Included therein, is the statement “Addressing vehicle weight restrictions that are barriers to zero emission MHDV deployment.” One such barrier is the 8,500 pound weight limit which will actually make it unlawful for an electric truck to park in an electric vehicle parking space at a truck stop or rest area. Similarly the 55 mph requirement effectively makes it unlawful for low speed electric vehicles to use a charging space.

The existing definition could also cause a conflict with a resident who gets approval and pays for a reserved electric vehicle parking space under SB 144 Electric Vehicle Recharging Equipment for Multifamily Units Act only to find that parking of their low speed electric vehicle is not lawful.

Montgomery County, Baltimore County, Howard County, and Annapolis have already generally adopted the flawed definition. However, a Howard County council member is considering amendments to improve the Howard County Code.

A simpler definition such as that found in most other jurisdictions should generally be:

IN THIS SECTION, "PLUG-IN VEHICLE" MEANS A VEHICLE THAT IS REGISTERED FOR USE ON A PUBLIC STREET, ROAD OR HIGHWAY THAT IS PROPELLED TO A SIGNIFICANT EXTENT BY AN ELECTRIC MOTOR THAT DRAWS ELECTRICITY FROM A BATTERY THAT CAN BE RECHARGED FROM AN EXTERNAL SOURCE OF ELECTRICITY.

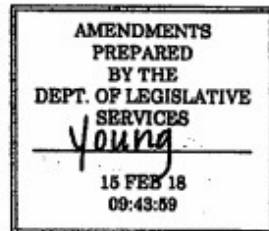
Thus, enforcement will be easier: does the vehicle have a license plate and a plug.

The attached amendment from the 2018 Session shows that then Delegate Lam was working to improve the definition. However, each year it seems that all such work is forgotten.

I also regret that over the past four years the ZEEVIC has made repeated excuses and has ignored numerous requests to either fix these problems in State legislation or suggest model legislation for local jurisdictions to not create impediments to the deployment of electric trucks and low speed vehicles.



HB0598/933922/1



BY: Delegate Lam
(To be offered in the Environment and Transportation Committee)

AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL 598
(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 1, in line 13, strike "defining a certain term" and substitute "defining certain terms"; and strike in their entirety lines 16 through 20, inclusive.

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 2, strike in their entirety lines 3 through 18, inclusive; in line 20, after "(A)" insert "(1)"; in the same line, strike the comma; in the same line, strike "PLUG" and substitute "PLUG"; and in the same line, after "SECTION" insert "THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(2) (i) "PLUG-IN ELECTRIC DRIVE VEHICLE" MEANS A MOTOR VEHICLE THAT:

1. IS MADE BY A MANUFACTURER;
2. IS MANUFACTURED PRIMARILY FOR USE ON PUBLIC STREETS, ROADS, AND HIGHWAYS; AND
3. IS PROPELLED TO A SIGNIFICANT EXTENT BY AN ELECTRIC MOTOR THAT DRAWS ELECTRICITY FROM A BATTERY THAT IS CAPABLE OF BEING RECHARGED FROM AN EXTERNAL SOURCE OF ELECTRICITY.

(ii) "PLUG-IN ELECTRIC DRIVE VEHICLE" INCLUDES A QUALIFYING VEHICLE THAT HAS BEEN MODIFIED FROM ORIGINAL MANUFACTURER SPECIFICATIONS.

(Over)

HB0598/933922/1
Amendments to HB 598
Page 2 of 2

Lam

(3).