

Motor Vehicle Registration Clarification Act (HB 368)
Testimony of Donald Beers—Favorable

To: House Environment and Transportation Committee

I wish to thank the legislature for considering this bill, which is a technical fix to a problem that is unintentionally created by the current legislative language. The current language has resulted in a waste of the time and resources of the state government and of Maryland citizens.

I want to make it clear that this proposed amendment, which I think was initially prompted by my own experience, should not be considered an attack on the MVA or its actions. I have recently retired from Federal government service and have often had to deal with situations in which the government agencies are blamed for problems that are inadvertent results of the laws that they are assigned to administer.

My own experience illustrates the problem that HB 368 would fix:

On the evening of July 2 of last year, I traded in the car that I had been driving at a dealership. On July 3, I returned the license plates for that car, leaving them in the self-service drop box at the MVA facility in Rockville. The MVA subsequently acknowledged receipt of the plates and refunded the unused portion of my registration fee.

On July 23, MVA issued a notice stating that I was being assessed a \$150 fine because the plates that I had turned in were not covered by insurance. I called the MVA to try to clear this up. After a great deal of difficulty getting through to the right person, I was able to speak with a representative, who checked the information that I provided and closed the matter without me paying the fine. The representative confirmed that this process—notice of fines that are essentially mistakes followed by contacting the MVA to explain the circumstances followed by having the fine remitted—is not uncommon.

I have to assume that the fine notices are issued automatically pursuant to some computer program that reflects current law. This of course ends up in a waste of MVA resources (in my own case I spoke with 3 different people at the MVA before I got through to the right person) and serves only to cause distress for citizens for no gain whatsoever to the state.

HB 368 is a simple fix to this problem, and I encourage its passage. Since currently almost anyone who would be exempted by this bill would be expected to contact the MVA, explain the situation, and have the fine remitted, there would be no loss of revenue to the state and those at MVA who have to deal with these calls could work on other matters. This seems, to me at least, a reasonable way to address this issue that should not have any opposition.

This is, I know, a small matter in the scheme of things, but it is a problem with a solution. I hope it will be adopted.

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