



State of Maryland
Department of State Police
Government Affairs Section
Annapolis Office (410) 260-6100

POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

DATE: February 24, 2022

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 670

Position: Letter of Information

BILL TITLE: Vehicle Laws – Registration Renewal – Inspection Requirement

REVIEW AND ANALYSIS:

This legislation seeks to require the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) to require the submission of an inspection certificate from an authorized inspection station with the request for a motor vehicle registration renewal. This inspection certificate shall demonstrate that a motor vehicle meets or exceeds the equipment standards for equipment established in this legislation. The inspection requirement is for vehicles that are a least five model years old and only exempts historic vehicles.

Under current law, a used motor vehicle shall be inspected by a certified inspection mechanic working at an authorized inspection station prior to the vehicle being registered in this state. Historic vehicles are exempt from this requirement. Maryland only requires an inspection prior to the registration of a used vehicle regardless of age, not annually or biannually. The Department of State Police (DSP) is responsible for the establishment of the statewide inspection program. DSP tests and certifies the inspection mechanics and the stations used for the inspections.

The state of Maryland also has a program in place for law enforcement officers to identify and potentially remove unsafe vehicles from the road. It is called the Safety Equipment Repair Order Program. Over 15,000 police officers in this state are able to stop a motor vehicle for any observed equipment violation and issue an order for repair and subsequent inspection of that violation. Annually, there are over 200,000 repair orders issued by police officers. Inspection stations performed over 802,000 inspections last year alone.

Regarding the specifics of SB 670, the inspection requirements would apply to over 4.3 million registered vehicles. Of the 4.3 million, 270,868 would be required to be inspected annually because the owner of the vehicle chose to renew the registration annually rather than every two years. There are only 1,537 inspection stations certified to perform the required inspection and they are restricted to charging a \$45 fee. The inspection stations are not mandated to perform the inspections, and could make more money performing other vehicle services. Equal access to inspectors and stations is limited, Western Maryland and the Eastern Shore have fewer stations than the Baltimore/Washington corridor thereby creating an inequitable ability to comply with the law.

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The inspection required by this legislation is only good for 90 days. If a vehicle owner had the car inspected to renew the registration and later sold the vehicle, it would be required to be inspected again if the inspection certificate was beyond the expiration period.

Typically, the MVA sends out a registration renewal notice in advance of the expiration of the tags. However, owners will have to wait to renew the registration to ensure the vehicle inspection certificate is still valid. If a vehicle fails to pass an inspection, the vehicle registration may not be renewed until the repairs are made.