

SB0599 - MVA - Driver Skills Examinations - LOI_FI

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Position: INFO



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Secretary

February 24, 2022

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chairman, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 599 – Vehicle Laws – Driver’s Licenses – Driver Skills Examinations

Dear Chairman Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on Senate Bill 599 but offers the following information for the Committee’s consideration.

Senate Bill 599 gives the MDOT Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) the authority to approve driver’s education schools to conduct and administer driver skills examinations for driver license applicants. Licensed and authorized drivers schools must conduct the driver’s skills examination using approved methods under a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the MDOT MVA or the MDOT MVA will terminate their authorization.

Senate Bill 599 would require significant changes to the current methods by which the MDOT MVA conducts driver skills testing and issues licenses. Under Senate Bill 599, the MDOT MVA would be responsible for ensuring consistency among the driver’s education schools, including that they obtain the proper resources for testing, how tests are conducted, staff training, and compliance with additional standards and regulations currently met by the MDOT MVA branch offices. Approximately 72,092 people complete driver’s education annually, and the MDOT MVA administers approximately 163,279 skills tests per year. It is unclear at this time how many of the approximate 373 driving school branches would be both interested in administering the skills testing and could meet the requirements of the MDOT MVA.

The MDOT MVA has a dedicated staff of inspectors that currently audit the driving schools for compliance in their current capacities. To implement Senate Bill 599, the MDOT MVA would require additional staff to meet the demands of increased audits. Senate Bill 599 raises additional questions in which the MDOT MVA seeks clarification, such as if schools may charge a fee for the skills test, whether schools would be authorized to collect the driver license fee on behalf of the MDOT MVA, whether the tester would have to return to an MDOT MVA branch to complete the licensing transaction, how to develop or adapt a driving course and road course, and how to address test failures.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating Senate Bill 599.

Respectfully submitted,

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