
March 5, 2025

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

RE: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 912 – Charles County – Off-Highway Recreational Vehicles – Regulation and Enforcement

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on Senate Bill 912 and offers the following information for the Committee’s consideration.

SB 912 authorizes Charles County to regulate off-highway recreational vehicle operation and requires that these vehicles be registered with the County and subject to impoundment for violations.

Maryland law requires off-road vehicles (ORV) to be titled with the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA). From Fiscal Year 2022 to February 2024, MVA issued 27,828 titles for all off-road vehicles currently eligible for titles. The MVA issues a decal to applicants to place on the ORV to indicate the title; decals include the title number which can be looked up by certain individuals, such as law enforcement, who are provided access to the MVA’s vehicle database.

When an ORV is sold by the original owner, the new buyer is responsible for filing a title application with the MVA. While exact numbers are not available, it is estimated that a vast majority of these secondary sales tend to be via private sales rather than a retail store, and the new buyer is not necessarily aware that they are required to title the ORV. Further, there is not a viable means for the previous owner to cancel a title in their name with the MVA unless the new owner obtains a title once purchased under one of these secondary market transactions. In addition, many dirt bikes and other ORVs are sold by large chain stores that do not provide titling services or advise buyers of these requirements. As these stores are not licensed dealerships the way a vehicle dealer is, the MVA has no means to audit their sales and ensure compliance with requirements for titling services with purchases.

While these factors cause challenges for titling requirement compliance due to a lack of uniform knowledge or means to educate buyers on the titling process or necessity, the standards of having the MVA be the sole government authority in Maryland where vehicle titles and registrations are issued does provide a uniformity and certainty for operators, owners, and law enforcement. The proposed legislation in SB 912 would alter that dynamic, including for non-residents of Charles County who seek to operate ORVs within its jurisdiction.

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For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the Committee consider this information when deliberating Senate Bill 912.

Respectfully submitted,

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