



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

HB0219

March 27, 2025

TO: Members of Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of the Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: House Bill 219 - Baltimore City - Out-of-State Vehicles - Improper Registration

POSITION: Support

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 219.

As amended, HB 219 establishes a process for handling vehicles which are improperly registered in another state. In its original form, the bill would have authorized Baltimore City to tow the vehicles of new Baltimore City residents who failed to register their vehicles in Maryland within the 60-day timeframe provided for under § 13-402. The amendments broaden the scope of the legislation to provide a system for addressing this issue statewide while reducing uncertainty through a formal written warning.

The amendments applied to HB 219 in many ways improve on the original legislation. To provide a brief overview of the process:

- **Registration Period.** Under current law, when a vehicle owner first moves to Maryland, they must register their vehicle within the first 60 days of moving.
- **Warning Period.** Vehicle owners who receive a warning are given a 60-day window to come into compliance with the law.
- **Fine Period.** Vehicle owners are assessed a fine of \$7 per day that their vehicle remains improperly registered, up to 60 days (a maximum of \$420).
- **Lawsuit.** After a minimum of 180 days of moving into Maryland, vehicle owners may be sued by a county's State's Attorney.
- **Booting/Impounding.** A State's Attorney may pursue booting or impounding as part of legal action taken against offending vehicle owners.

The BCA would like to highlight that the 180-day timeframe does not account for potential delays in the identification of improperly registered vehicle owners and does provide a significant amount of time for a vehicle to remain out of compliance and potentially creating unsafe conditions on our

roadways. Improperly registered vehicles do not contribute to critical vehicle revenue sources such as registration fees and may not be subject to emissions testing. Additionally, the maximum fine of \$420 provided for under this bill alone may not be enough to motivate many vehicle owners who otherwise may have little incentive to properly register their vehicles. However, we also recognize that this legislation will provide much needed motivation to owners to bring their vehicles into compliance with state law.

During calendar year 2023, Baltimore City Department of Transportation's Safety Division issued 34,555 parking citations to vehicles with out-of-state tags. Over 56% (19,486) of the vehicles cited with out of state tags were from one state alone. Additionally, BCDOT Safety Division reports flagging 3,723 vehicles during calendar year 2023 as having no tags displayed at the time of the violation.

The State and the City both have vested interest in determining that vehicles are registered properly to owners who maintain permanent residence within the State of Maryland. The amendments to this legislation improve the bill in many ways, removing uncertainty and creating a well-defined process that provides offending vehicle owners with plenty of opportunities to come into compliance.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable** report on HB 219.