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Dear Delegate Christopher Bouchat, Christopher Tomlinson As a lifelong Maryland resident and car enthusiast, I am deeply concerned about a recent change in the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025 (House Bill 352), which redefines eligibility for “historic vehicles.” This provision threatens Maryland’s vibrant automotive culture and places new burdens on responsible hobbyists like me. For years, Maryland has recognized vehicles that are at least 20 years old under Class L registration—a fair, rolling standard that encourages preservation and responsible ownership. Effective July 1, 2025, however, HB 352 limits eligibility to model years 1999 and earlier, replacing that rolling standard with a fixed cutoff. Because there is no grandfather clause, owners of vehicles from 2000 onward, must now re-register as standard vehicles. This change brings annual emissions testing, safety inspections, and higher registration fees, turning a cherished hobby into a financial and logistical challenge. The measure was enacted with limited public input, leaving car clubs and enthusiasts unaware until after passage. The result undermines automotive preservation efforts and discourages care for vehicles that represent important chapters in our recent history—from early-2000s performance cars to first-generation hybrids. Maryland’s car shows, cruises, and classic-vehicle events draw thousands of visitors each year, supporting local economies, charities and building community pride. A fixed 1999 cutoff is not reflective of a basic rule of history (time) and risks alienating/increasing costs for newer generations of enthusiasts and diminishing the state’s role as a home for automotive heritage. It is understandable that due to Maryland’s high “normal” registration costs and improved vehicle longevity, some have taken advantage of the lower Class L tag cost to break the law regarding daily use of historic tags. There are better solutions to discourage such use besides the HB 352 determination that “automotive history ended in 1999”.

These solutions include:

- A) Raising the historical eligibility to 25 years + rolling. This is the same 25 year requirement the Federal Government uses for imports and other vehicles. Despite general longer vehicle longevity, the maintenance costs to keep a 25+ year old vehicle running will overtake the reduced costs of a Class L and discourage illegal use.
- B) Requiring that historic tags can be issued for one or more vehicles only if there is already an existing standard vehicle registration for another vehicle in the owner’s name.
- C) A modest increase in historic tag fees could meet the same fiscal goals while allowing hobbyists to continue preserving their vehicles responsibly.
- D) Requiring mileage reporting to the MVA for Class L tags with a reasonable limit of 2500 miles per year to attend cars shows and other special events which discourages illegal daily driving use.
- E) Increase enforcement and fines for those found abusing Class L restrictions.

I respectfully urge you to sponsor or support legislation restoring the 20-year rolling eligibility for historic vehicle registration, or, one or more of the solutions above. These balanced changes would protect hobbyists, sustain local tourism, and reaffirm Maryland’s commitment to preserving automotive history. To date, 90,000 Maryland car enthusiasts on 17 different Facebook Maryland Car Groups are now aware of the HB 352 change and will be tracking your action on this matter.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our community. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further and can be reached at 443-878-4691.

Sincerely,

Martin Mogavero

