

SB352_Old Line Plate Program Act of 2026_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Grason Wiggins

Position: FAV



Senate Bill 352

Date: February 4, 2026

Committee: Budget and Taxation

Position: Favorable

Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber) is the leading voice for business in Maryland. We are a statewide coalition of more than 7,000 members and federated partners, and we work to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic growth for Maryland businesses, employees, and families.

Senate Bill 352 (SB 352) directs the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration to develop and make available an Old Line Plate with a numeric-only registration number for qualifying vehicles, establish a public auction program for registration number rights, and authorize the transfer of those rights under specified conditions. Revenues from fees and auctions would be credited to the Transportation Trust Fund.

SB 352 provides a market-based means to generate additional revenue that can be directed to the Transportation Trust Fund – supporting infrastructure investment through a voluntary, user-driven program.

Similar specialty plate programs in other states demonstrate strong public demand and meaningful revenue potential. In Arizona, specialty license plates generate more than \$10 million annually, with several individual plates each producing over \$1 million per year. Massachusetts' specialty plate program raises more than \$5 million annually and has generated nearly \$100 million since its inception. More recently, states such as Indiana and Minnesota have seen rapid uptake of newly introduced specialty plates, with Indiana's "Blackout" plate generating millions of dollars in its first year and Minnesota issuing more than 250,000 plates in the first year of the program and generating millions in revenue. These examples demonstrate that distinctive plate offerings can serve as sustainable, long-term revenue drivers that engage residents and promote state identity.

Maryland faces ongoing and growing transportation funding needs. Ensuring a reliable and diversified revenue stream is critical to maintaining and improving roads, bridges, and transit system that support commerce, workforce mobility, and economic competitiveness across the state. SB 352 offers an innovative tool to help supplement transportation funding while providing an additional, practical funding mechanism for the Transportation Trust Fund.

For these reasons, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce respectfully requests a **favorable report on SB 352**.

ACECMD - 2026 Testimony - SB 352:HB68 — Motor Veh

Uploaded by: Rory Murray

Position: FAV



Hon. William C. Smith
Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Hon. Marc Korman
Environment and Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE:SB 352/HB68 — Motor Vehicles - Special Registration Plates - Old Line Plates (Old Line Plate Program Act of 2026)

Position: Support

On behalf of the Maryland Chapter of the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC/MD), we respectfully submit this letter in support of Senate Bill 352/House Bill 68. ACEC/MD represents Maryland's private-sector engineering firms that design and deliver the transportation, water, environmental, and public works infrastructure that local governments and the State rely upon every day. Our members are deeply invested in stable, predictable transportation funding because it drives capital planning, project readiness, and delivery performance and economic growth across Maryland.

From our perspective as the engineering firms that plan, design, and deliver Maryland's transportation infrastructure, SB352/HB 68 offers a relatively easy, voluntary, and market-driven way to generate incremental new revenue for the Transportation Trust Fund. By leveraging the strong interest in low-number and historic-style plates through live, online, or sealed-bid auctions, the State can capture value that is currently unrealized, while giving enthusiasts a legal, transparent mechanism to obtain and trade these numbers under clear, enforceable rules.

Respectfully,

Maria Donovan
Executive Director
ACEC/MD

SB0352 PresMD FAV (AMENDMENTS).pdf

Uploaded by: Nicholas Redding

Position: FWA



PRESERVATION MARYLAND

February 04, 2026

Hon. William C. Smith, Jr.
Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland

RE: SB0352 FAVORABLE With Amendments

Chairperson Smith,

On behalf of the staff and Board of Directors of Preservation Maryland and our thousands of statewide supporters, I thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in **SUPPORT of SB0352 with Amendments** – a piece of legislation that will require the Motor Vehicle Administration to develop and make available a historic license plate for motor vehicles.

Why We Support This Legislation?

Our organization supports this legislation because it presents a creative opportunity for the general public to engage with the past and celebrate the history of our state. By creating a tangible connection between the past and the present, this legislation also has the potential to inspire citizens to preserve the historic resources of our state.

Additionally, in talks with the bill sponsors, we believe there may be an opportunity to utilize revenue generated by the program to support preservation projects in the state – thereby using the history of the state to benefit its preservation.

Requested Amendments

1. We have requested that the **revenue, after administrative costs, generated by the program be deposited in the following manner to support preservation** (starting at line 20 in the draft bill):

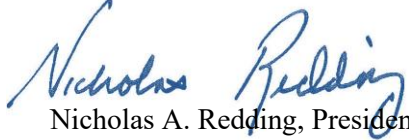
20 (2) CREDITED TO THE MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST FOR ANNUAL DISBURSEMENT TO A STATEWIDE, HISTORIC PRESERVATION NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION WITH DEMONSTRATED EXPERIENCE IN GRANTMAKING, IN ORDER TO MANAGE AND COMPETITIVELY AWARD THE FUNDS AS GRANTS TO DESERVING PRESERVATION PROJECTS STATEWIDE.

2. Preservation Maryland, along with many representatives of the state's heritage and history community, request that the **bill title be amended to Old Line License Plate**. Old Line Plate has been the trade name used by Kara Mae Harris for the past decade as part of her efforts to elevate awareness of the state's culinary heritage and using the same name could unintentionally distract from her work and the several books she has published on the subject.

SB0352 is an innovative piece of legislation with the potential to inspire, generate funds for preservation, and build awareness for the history of our state, and we therefore urge a favorable report with amendments.

Favorable with Amendments

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nicholas Redding". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'N' and 'R'.

Nicholas A. Redding, President & CEO

Ches Bay Trust-MAEF Testimony - SB352.pdf

Uploaded by: Jana Davis

Position: INFO



Senate Bill 352 Old Line Plate Written Testimony

Date: February 4, 2026

For Information

Submitted to: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Submitted by: Chesapeake Bay Trust and the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation

Maryland has two specialty license plate tags, the “bay plate” and the “ag tag.” The revenue from the ag tag is managed by the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to increasing agricultural literacy and agricultural education with programs serving pre-kindergarten through post-secondary audience. The revenue from the bay plate (now the “bays” plate, as it newly celebrates the Coastal Bays as well as the Chesapeake Bay) is distributed by the legislatively created nonprofit Chesapeake Bay Trust as grants to community-based groups interested in leading their own natural resources work. The Trust was intentionally not created with an operating appropriation, instead funded with the bay plate and several other similar state-created revenue streams.

Numbers of bay plates and ag tags sold per year have remained relatively constant since 2010, maintained with active marketing programs. The plate revenue is the backbone of both organizations’ larger revenue streams. For example, the Bay Trust leverages the bay plate revenue to attract \$20-30 million more from other sources.

The Nature of License Plate Revenue

As many members of the committee know, the Trust and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation (MAEF) together follow the license plate picture in Maryland each year. Because there is a finite number of registered vehicles, and therefore a finite number of potential bay/ag-tag purchasers, there is a finite amount of bay/ag tags to be sold. Data from other states show that only about 8-10% of car owners will spend additional money for a specialty license plate (Figure 1 below), driven, as we know from public opinion polling, mainly by aesthetics. Maryland is at about 10% saturation level now. Therefore, new license plate specialty options are not likely to lead to an increased number of people choosing them.

It is our understanding from a conversation with the sponsor of the HB68, the House crossfile of this bill, that the Old Line Plate is intended to be administered in small quantities (which creates the high demand and high dollar value designed) for a finite period of time. In that case, the negative impact on the bay plate and the ag tag would be minimal. (Though not zero: By definition, if a vehicle owner purchases an Old Line plate, he/she/they cannot also purchase a bay or ag tag, and some bay/ag tag owners may trade their tags in for Old Line plates). We would be supportive of an amendment that would articulate a sunset provision of the Old Line Plate to limit the impact to no more than 2 years and an amendment that would articulate a maximum number of Old Line plates to be produced and sold.

About the Chesapeake Bay Trust

The Trust was created by the Maryland General Assembly in 1985 as a nonprofit grant-making organization with a goal to empower community-based groups to play a role in the restoration of the state's local rivers, streams, parks, and other natural resources in diverse communities across the state, from the mountains of Western Maryland and the Youghiogheny watershed to the marshes of the Coastal Bays. The goal was to create an entity that complements state agency work by empowering groups on the ground: schools, nonprofit organizations, faith-based and reach large institutions, homeowners associations, community and civic associations, and other types of groups.

The Trust is known for its efficiency, putting more than 90 cents of every dollar into programs. The Trust has awarded close to \$200m through 13,000 grants and projects in every county in Maryland since 1985. We now average about 500 grants and other awards a year and have about 1,000 active awardees at a time.

Due to its efficiency, the Trust has been rated with the maximum four-star rating by the nation's leading charity evaluator, Charity Navigator, for more than two decades, putting it in the top 1% of non-profits in the nation.

One of the Trust's basic tenets in its strategic plan is to engage under-engaged audiences in natural resources issues. Every individual in our area benefits from healthy natural resources, and in turn, every individual can help natural resources.



About the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation

Dedicated to increasing agricultural literacy and agricultural education, the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation (MAEF) is a nonprofit organization with programs serving pre-kindergarten through post-secondary audiences. MAEF signature programs include mobile science labs; mobile agricultural showcases; professional development courses for teachers and Maryland FFA.

Agriculture plays a critical role in our lives, providing elements that are essential to life while at the same time supporting Maryland's economy, environment and quality of life. It provides an engaging context for teaching science, social studies, life skills, mathematics, and language arts. Incorporating agriculture into teaching and learning creates the foundation that students, as future citizens, need to make educated decisions regarding food choices and nutrition, community issues, land use planning, and natural resource conservation.



MAEF works closely with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and post-secondary partners to ensure that the next generation of agriculturalists and those in professions which support

Maryland agriculture have opportunities to prepare for careers. With 50 agriculture programs in public schools across the state, MAEF provides support for agriculture teachers through professional development, classroom support and curriculum training. MAEF's administration of Maryland FFA, with grant support from MSDE, empowers nearly 3,000 members to grow as leaders, learners and advocates for agriculture, the environment and natural resources in Maryland. Through hands-on experiences, competitions and leadership development, Maryland FFA equips young people with the confidence and skills they need to make a positive impact in their careers.

Agriculture plays a critical role in our lives. It provides an experiential teaching tool for the core curricula of science, social studies, life skills, mathematics, and language arts. Incorporating agriculture into teaching and learning creates the foundation that students, as future citizens, need to make educated decisions regarding food choices and nutrition, community issues, land use planning, and natural resource conservation.



The Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit, non-governmental organization established in 1989.

Figure 1: Market saturation of background scene/specialty license plates occurs at about 7-8% of the vehicle owners

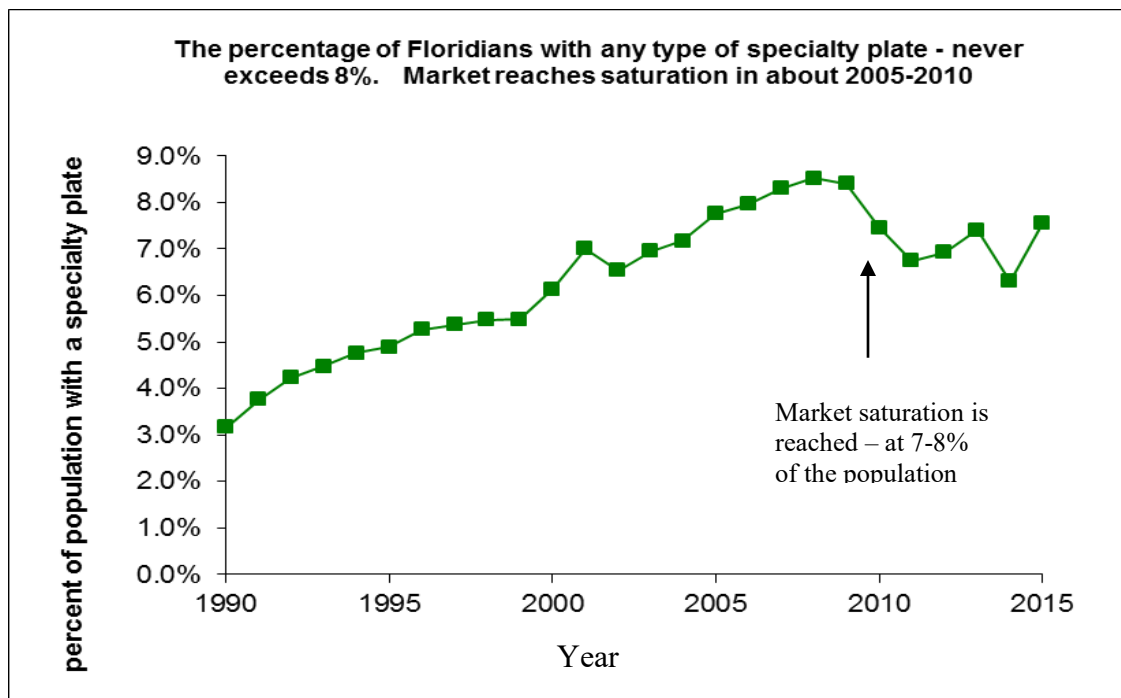


Figure 2a: Examples of decreases in specialty license plate revenue with increasing #s of additional plates: Blue line shows the # of plate options for vehicle owners, and the pink lines are the revenue generated by the plate (e.g., the # of people who buy them.)

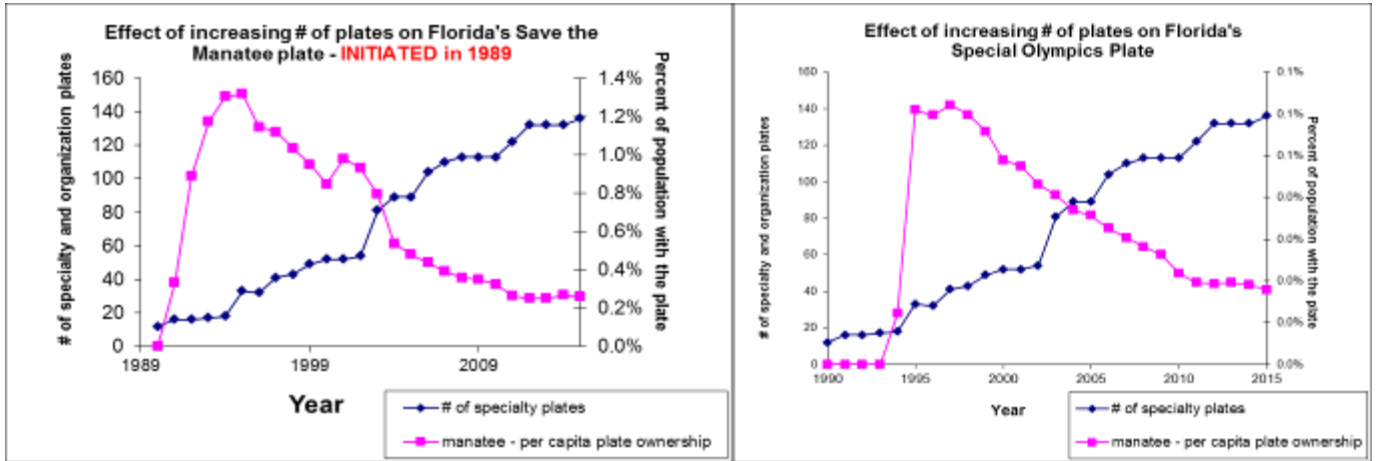
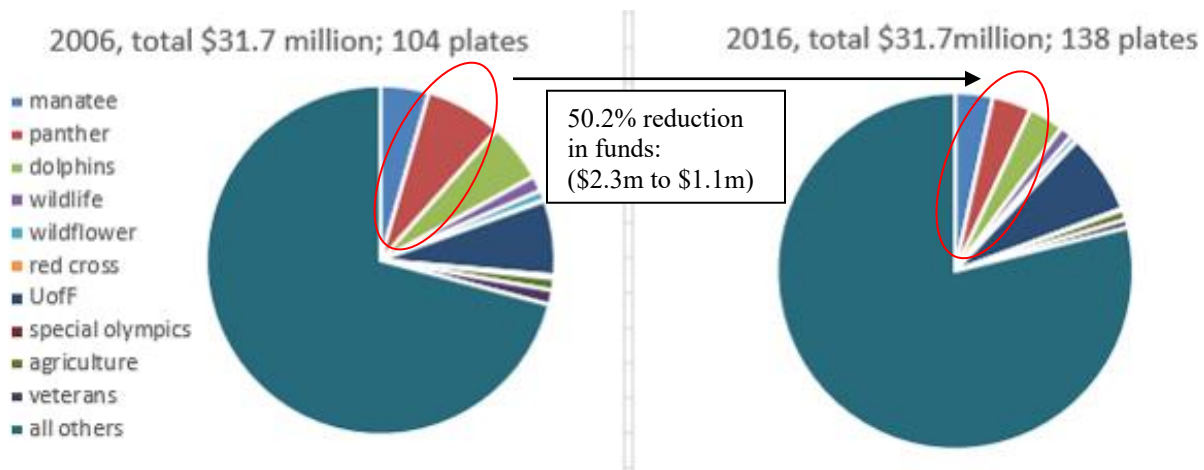


Figure 2b: The “Pie Problem:” In 2006 and 2016, Floridians spent the same total amount on specialty license plates, despite more options in 2016. The plates that existed in 2006 all had lower revenues (smaller pieces of the pie) in 2016. E.g., the panther plate generated \$2.3m in 2006 then dropped to \$1.1m with more plate options in 2016 (red pie slices below)



SB0352 - LOI – MVA - Special Registration Plates -

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: INFO

February 4, 2026

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

RE: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 352 – Motor Vehicles – Special Registration Plates – Old Line Plates (Old Line Plate Program Act of 2026)

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on Senate Bill 352 but offers the following information for the Committee’s consideration.

SB 352 creates a new alternative registration plate called the “Old Line Plate” that is to be issued by the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) with the design based on the license plate issued to vehicles in 1911. The numeric only registration numbers, titled “Old Line Numbers,” are to be auctioned off to applicants, and the MVA is to issue a plate with those numbers to the “rights holder” of that number. The bill further details how license plates, once issued, can be transferred under limited circumstances or returned to the MVA along with other relevant administrative details.

Maryland’s current standard plate, the “Maryland Proud” design based on the State flag, uses an alpha-numeric code that is unique to each plate and printed in a clear font with an easy-to-read contrasting background using the Maryland state flag along the bottom of the plate, giving it a distinctive and easily recognizable design from other jurisdiction plates. This is in line with the standards for best practices as established by the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA)¹. These standards include a clearly identifiable plate that includes the jurisdiction along the top of the plate along with the use of unique alpha-numeric characters, fonts that are easy to read and provide a clear distinguishment for similar characters (i.e. O, Q, and 0), a background that does not interfere with the plate number, and is manufactured in such a manner that it allows for high-contrast recognition for infrared and visible light illumination in both daylight and nighttime conditions, including the ability to read it from distances of at least 75 feet.

When plates do not follow AAMVA standards, such as dark backgrounds that may reduce visibility or not using the prescribed alpha-numeric formatting, it can cause problems for automated plate reader (ALPRs) technology used by law enforcement and tolling authorities. These types of plates often require specific coding to be created in the software which increases

¹ AAMVA License Plate Standard, Edition 3, October 2023, Updated September 2025.

The Honorable William C. Smith Jr.
Page Two

the ability to read these plates by ALPRs, but at the expense of less accurate reading of plates that follow these practices.

The MVA has not previously conducted auctions for its license plates or for the assigned plate number. Doing so will require staff resources to identify the best means to conduct such an auction, establish a relationship with potential vendors should any be needed, and complete all of this and hold an auction by December 1, 2026. Such expenses would have to be recouped solely through the monies raised at auction as there are no additional fees for administering the unique costs for the Old Line Plate program unlike the annual fees assessed for other specialty plate programs offered by the MVA. These administrative impacts and costs to the MVA are in addition to working with its plate vendor to design and produce the plates. Maryland Correctional Enterprises, who produces license plates for the MVA, indicated in the fiscal note submitted for this proposal that the plates would be more than double the standard production costs of MVA specialty tags, averaging \$23.50 compared to the \$10 per set of specialty plates.

In addition to its standard flag tag design, the MVA currently offers agricultural and bay license plates, amateur radio operator license plates, 1910 vintage license plates, 138 military plates for qualified veterans, three kinds of disabled veterans' plates including an organization plate, 843 other organizational plates with a logo, and 69 organizational plates without logos for customers to choose from. In addition, customers can further customize plates with personalized alpha-numeric codes more commonly known as vanity plates, and eligible customers can obtain a disability plate. This is in addition to unique vehicle class plates such as motorcycle plates, fleet vehicles, apportioned, and other types of registration class plates and previous standard registration plates such as the War of 1812 that are still in use by customers. The MVA offers one of the broadest selections of registration plates to its customers in the country.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the committee consider this information during its deliberation of Senate Bill 352.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine E. Nizer
Administrator
Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration
410-787-7830

Matthew Mickler
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090