



P.O. Box 278
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Committee: Environment and Transportation

Testimony on: HB312 - “Vehicle Emissions Inspection Program – Not Subject to Inspection – Fee”

Position: Support

Hearing Date: February 9, 2023

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports HB312 to establish a recurring fee on each motor vehicle registered in the state that is exempt from Maryland’s Vehicle Emissions Inspection Program (VEIP). The fee would be deposited into the Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund and be used to purchase electric transit and school buses, expand electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure, and provide rebates on the sale of EVs.

People drive many millions of miles in Maryland daily. Emissions from gasoline and diesel-powered vehicles are a primary source of climate-disrupting greenhouse gases and other toxic emissions that are hazardous to human health and need to be reduced.

Maryland’s VEIP plays an important role in the state’s efforts to improve air quality. By requiring vehicles registered for the first time to have their emissions tested 36 months from their registration date and every two years thereafter, the VEIP is able to identify vehicles that fail to meet emission standards and require needed repairs in order to continue to travel in the state. There is a \$14 fee for the VEIP test.

However, certain vehicles are exempt from participating in the VEIP and so do not currently have to pay \$14 every two years. The list includes vehicles powered solely by diesel fuel or electricity, motorcycles, vehicle models 1995 or older under 8,500 lbs., vehicles weighing more than 26,000 lbs., farm trucks, tractors and specialized vehicles, historic and antique vehicles, fire and ambulance vehicles, school vehicles and passenger buses, and military vehicles.

The number of vehicles exempt from VEIP will continue to grow as more electric vehicles are purchased. This legislation is an equitable way to raise funds needed to stimulate the purchase of EVs to improve the quality of the air we breathe. The owner of each motor vehicle registered in the state that is exempt from the VEIP would be required to pay the same modest amount every two years, \$14, as other vehicle owners pay for VEIP every two years. We believe this makes sense and urge a favorable report on this bill.

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Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.