

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2008 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

House Bill 1574 (Delegate O'Donnell)  
Environmental Matters

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**Motor Vehicles - Registration for Individuals with Disabilities**

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This bill authorizes the Motor Vehicle Administration to accept an application for an additional special disability registration from an applicant who already possesses one valid special disability registration and had possessed two valid special disability registrations issued prior to January 1, 2006. The bill also prohibits the issuance of a disability placard to an applicant who requests two sets of special registration plates.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Transportation Trust Fund expenditures could increase for the cost of reprogramming MVA computers if this task is not able to be accomplished with existing staff and resources.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** MVA may provide a special disability registration number and plate to the owner of a vehicle who submits satisfactory proof of specified physical disabilities. A licensed physician, chiropractor, optometrist, or podiatrist must certify that the vehicle owner has a cardiovascular, lung, ambulatory, visual, or other specified disability in accordance with provisions of the Transportation Article.

MVA may not accept an application for special disability registration from an applicant who possesses • one valid special registration; or • two parking placards. In addition, MVA may not issue • more than one placard if the applicant also requests one set of special disability registration plates; or • more than two placards if the applicant does not also request a set of special disability registration plates. Thus, an individual can only hold a combination of two total placards or special disability registration plates, but can have no more than one set of registration plates.

**Background:** Current law reflects a recommendation made by the Task Force on Parking for Individuals with Disabilities, created pursuant to Chapter 268 of 2004. The task force recommended that the total number of permanent disability placards and plates an individual can receive be limited to • one set of plates and one placard; or • two placards if the individual does not request a disability plate.

This recommendation was made to rectify the potential for fraudulent use of disability placards. It was noted by the task force that Maryland law was more generous than the relevant federal standards in the combination of placards and plates that could be issued. The task force cited MVA statistics that there were 336,000 disabled parking placards for approximately 250,000 disabled parking privilege holders.

Chapter 326 of 2005, which took effect January 1, 2006, put in place the current limit of two special registration plates and placards in combination. The bill would allow individuals who had previously been issued two special disability registration plates to again hold two registration plates as long as no placards were issued.

**State Expenditures:** MVA advises that the bill's requirements would require significant reprogramming of its Disability Permitting System. If this work is not able to be accomplished with existing staff and resources, MVA advises that it would need to contract with an outside computer services vendor at a cost of \$66,250. Legislative Services advises that, if other legislation is passed requiring computer reprogramming changes, economies of scale could be realized. This would reduce the costs associated with this bill and other legislation affecting MVA computer systems.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Disabilities, Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

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mcp/ljm

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