

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

House Bill 217 (Delegates Lisanti and Johnson)  
Environment and Transportation

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Motor Vehicle Registration - Exception - City of Havre de Grace

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This bill authorizes the City of Havre de Grace to own and operate low-speed electric vehicles on local roadways in that city, without those vehicles having to be registered and only if the vehicles are operated in a specified manner. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2020.**

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** The bill is not anticipated to materially affect State finances or operations.

**Local Effect:** The bill is not anticipated to materially affect local finances or operations.

**Small Business Effect:** Potential minimal.

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Analysis

**Bill Summary:** A person may operate a low-speed electric vehicle (*i.e.*, a vehicle capable of a sustained speed of 20 miles per hour and not capable of exceeding 25 miles per hour) on a local roadway in the City of Havre de Grace on which the maximum posted speed limit does not exceed 30 miles per hour. However, this authorization only applies to a low-speed electric vehicle owned and operated by the City of Havre de Grace. In addition, the low-speed electric vehicle must be kept as far to the right of the roadway as feasible, and the driver must have a valid driver's license. A low-speed electric vehicle owned and operated by the City of Havre de Grace and operated on a roadway in that city in the manner authorized by the bill is exempt from the general requirement that each motor vehicle driven on a highway in the State be registered. When operated between dusk and dawn, the low-speed electric vehicle must be equipped with lighting devices as required by the Motor Vehicle Administration. The State Highway Administration, in consultation with the

City of Havre de Grace, may designate a location at which a person operating a low-speed electric vehicle may cross (at a right angle) a roadway that is designated (or maintained) as a part of (or an extension of) the State or federal highway system.

**Current Law:** Each motor vehicle, trailer, semitrailer, and pole trailer driven on a highway must be registered. Certain motor vehicles are exempt from this requirement, including certain snowmobiles in Allegany and Garrett counties and certain golf carts in Allegany County, Smith Island, the City of Crisfield in Somerset County, the community of Golden Beach Patuxent Knolls in St. Mary’s County, and the Town of Vienna in Dorchester County.

A “motor vehicle” is defined as a vehicle that, unless otherwise specifically exempted, is self-propelled or propelled by electric power obtained from overhead electrical wires and not operated on rails. Certain vehicles, such as low-speed vehicles, bicycles, and motor scooters, are restricted to certain highways based on the maximum posted speed limit; they may be subject to different rules of the road than passenger cars and trucks.

**Additional Comments:** The City of Havre de Grace advises that it intends to operate a trolley under the bill’s authorization from April to October and that the bill may help mitigate traffic congestion.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** As amended by the Senate, SB 389 of 2019 was identical to this bill. SB 389 and its cross file HB 467, both received an unfavorable report from the House Environment and Transportation Committee.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** City of Havre de Grace; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 20, 2020  
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