



BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

Michael S. Harrison
Police Commissioner

TO: The Honorable Members of the House Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Michelle Wirzberger, Esq., Director of Government Affairs, Baltimore Police Dept.

RE: House Bill 1246 Vehicle Excise Tax – Leased Vehicles - Alteration

DATE: March 2, 2021

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Kaiser, Vice-Chair Washington, and members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore Police Department **supports** House Bill 1246.

House Bill 1246 alters the calculation of the vehicle excise tax imposed for the issuance of a certificate of title for certain leased vehicles to be a certain percentage of the capitalized cost reduction and each monthly lease payment rather than the total purchase price which is currently utilized.

Law enforcement officers are trained to stop drivers who are operating vehicles that both appear unsafe due to inoperable tail lights, head lights, rear view mirrors, etc. During those stops, they can take a variety of enforcement action depending upon the severity of the infraction. Often times, they will provide the driver with a citation and an established amount of time to repair the damaged or nonfunctioning part of the vehicle in order to protect both the driver and other drivers he may encounter on the road. In 2019, the Baltimore Police Department issued in excess of 8,400 such repair orders and warnings.

Officers are also required to ensure that vehicles they encounter are properly registered and that they display the appropriate registration and validation tags. This is done for a variety of reasons but primarily to ensure that the vehicles have been properly inspected and certified to be safe. In 2019, the Baltimore Police Department issued in excess of 11,000 citations and warnings to drivers with cancelled, expired or suspended registrations. These vehicles present a danger to all drivers.

Overall, the Baltimore Police Department believes that this bill will make it more affordable for drivers to utilize a leased vehicle instead of being forced to drive unsafe and/or unregistered vehicles that they cannot afford to repair and/or register. That alone, would go along way toward reducing the amount of unregistered and unsafe vehicles on the road and thereby make all Maryland drivers safer. Therefore, the Baltimore Police Department respectfully requests a **favorable** report on House Bill 1246.