



Driver's Education Association of Maryland

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February 28, 2018

Environment and Transportation Committee TESTIMONY

Re: HB998, Vehicle Laws - Drivers' Schools - Age of Instruction Vehicles

Christopher Ertel – Driver's Education Association of Maryland (DEAM)

Delegate McConkey (*Bill Sponsor*) and other distinguished Environment and Transportation Committee members, I want to thank you for this opportunity to address House Bill 998 (HB998).

The Drivers Education Association of Maryland (DEAM) is a statewide network of Professional Driving Schools working together in conjunction with the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) in an effort to provide Driver's Education to new Maryland Drivers as well as remedial education for those drivers who have accrued points as a result of errant driving behavior. We support HB998 that increases the maximum allowable age of vehicles used for instruction in a driver's school from 7 to 10 years.

This Bill has been widely anticipated as it will have a significant impact on the finances and operations of our Maryland licensed Professional Driver's Education Schools.

As you know, Professional Driving Schools educate students on the rules of the road in a classroom setting and with behind-the-wheel training – to prepare them for securing a Maryland Driver's License. Professional Driving Schools are licensed by the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA). Each licensee provides the behind-the-wheel training in its privately owned instructional vehicles and must maintain all vehicles in conditions required by MVA.

COMAR 11.23.02 requires all Driver's Education training vehicles to be in good shape and inspected annually, as follows:

Subsection .33 (C) –

- (3) Service, clean, and maintain training vehicles on a regular schedule;
- (4) Have all training vehicles inspected annually by a licensed State inspection station;
- (5) Only use a training vehicle for instruction in the driver education program that has passed the annual Maryland State Inspection;

Advances in automotive technology have greatly increased the reliability and longevity of vehicles, and according to the most recent U.S. DOT data, the average age of all light vehicles in operation is nearly 12 years.

Accordingly, it is reasonable to believe that a 7, 8, or 9-year-old vehicle - having been maintained properly and inspected annually - has plenty of remaining life.

A driving school incurs many different operating expenses, but the purchase of a new vehicle is conceivably one of its largest expenses. HB998's change in maximum allowable age of instructional vehicles will mean that driving schools may be able to purchase new vehicles less often, resulting in significant business savings.

House Bill (HB998), Entitled: Vehicle Laws - Drivers' Schools - Age of Instruction Vehicles, will obviously correct a major concern regarding the age of vehicles being used in driver instruction, and alleviate added financial expenses for a sector of Maryland's small business that provides a valuable educational service.

I respectfully ask that members of the Environment and Transportation Committee grant HB998 a favorable report.

Drivers Education Association of Maryland,



Christopher Ertel
Director of Operations