

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 1740

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

DATED: JANUARY 28, 2021

SUMMARY

Synopsis: Requires MVC to place notation on vehicle’s registration certificate indicating registrant is deaf.

Type of Impact: Increased State cost.

Agencies Affected: New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>Annual</u>
State Cost Increase	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) projects that the bill will result in indeterminate initial development costs and ongoing administrative expenditures for the State. The magnitude of any State cost increase will depend on implementation decisions made by the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC), which the OLS is unable to anticipate.
- It is not known what type of changes will be made to registration documents or the cost to make those changes; however, programming or design changes of this type can largely be completed with the assistance of the Office of Information Technology (OIT), and the change orders are expected to be comparable to other change orders that the MVC has issued to its vendors in the past for document alterations. The bill’s requirements are not expected to significantly alter the existing contract with document vendors.
- The timing of the fiscal impact is also unclear because the bill takes effect 180 days following the end of the COVID-19 state of emergency. The likely end date of the state of emergency is not clear at this time.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill requires the Chief Administrator of the MVC to place a notation on a vehicle's registration certificate indicating the registrant is deaf. This notation would be placed on the certificate provided the applicant has a hearing loss of 41 decibels or greater. As part of the application process, an otorhinolaryngologist (ENT) or an audiologist clinically certified by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association is required to verify the applicant's hearing ability. Upon approval, the Chief Administrator is required to issue the applicant a special registration certificate with the international symbol for deafness or a numerical code designating deafness, whichever the applicant prefers. No additional fees will be assessed for applicants who seek a special registration certificate.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS projects that implementing the bill will result in indeterminate initial development costs and ongoing administrative expenditures for the State to develop and issue a special registration document. The magnitude of any State cost increase will depend on implementation decisions made by the MVC, which the OLS is unable to anticipate.

Initial State Development Expenditures: The MVC will be responsible for determining how to convey deafness on driver's registration document. The bill does not specify the specific form of the designation, which is intended to assist a deaf driver with law enforcement interactions. The MVC has existing staff capable of registration design work, but the changes will consume MVC staff hours. Once the manner of designation is decided, it may be necessary, potentially assisted by the OIT, to redesign the software that produces driver's registration documents to incorporate those changes. The MVC periodically makes change orders of this type, but the OLS does not have access to the cost or nature of these change orders, so it is not possible to determine an estimate from a comparable change order for the various types of alterations that the MVC may undertake. Once the changes have taken effect, it will also likely be necessary for the MVC to train staff on the new registration designation, so that staff can provide proper assistance to members of the public that may seek this designation, as well as inform staff of the proper way to process registration paperwork that will now include this new form of registration document.

Annual State Expenditures: The bill's registration designation may add to annual MVC operating expenditures by an indeterminate amount and will depend on the MVC's implementation decisions. Ongoing costs to the MVC will be higher if incorporation of the special registration designation requires the production of additional documents or if the process of generating the new registration documents require notable additional data entry or additional customer service time. Given the size of the State population, small increases in paper generated, back office data work, or in-person customer service time can multiply rapidly, especially if those changes apply to the entire registration system, rather than just those individual registrations noting deafness.

Section: Authorities, Utilities, Transportation and Communications

*Analyst: Patrick Brennan
Principal Fiscal Analyst*

*Approved: Thomas Koenig
Assistant Legislative Budget and Finance Officer*

This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).