



Albemarle County

Legislation Text

File #: 20-159, **Version:** 1

AGENDA DATE: 2/5/2020

TITLE:

Motor Vehicle Safety Inspections

SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Resolution to oppose legislation to eliminate Virginia's Motor Vehicle Safety Inspection Program.

ITEM TYPE: Consent Action Item

STAFF CONTACT(S): Richardson, Walker, Kamptner, Lantz, Jenkins

PRESENTER (S): Chief Ron L. Lantz

LEGAL REVIEW: Yes

REVIEWED BY: Jeffrey B. Richardson

BACKGROUND: The Virginia Motor Vehicle Safety Inspection Program was started in 1932 to help reduce highway crashes and deaths. According to the Virginia State Police, the program is the oldest continuous motor vehicle inspection program in the United States and has been used as a model program for countries worldwide.

Virginia currently requires all vehicles registered in the Commonwealth to undergo a safety inspection annually to ensure that each vehicle meets safety standards for the highway. During each safety inspection, certified technicians confirm operating standards for twenty-one vehicles systems or elements, including brakes, tires, and safety equipment such as headlights and turn signals. The regulation applies to all vehicles, from personal vehicles to commercial buses and tractor-trailers.

The Virginia Safety Inspection Program is managed by the Virginia State Police with 5,433 inspection stations throughout the state which employ 15,566 certified inspectors.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Mission: To enhance the well-being and quality of life for all citizens through the provision of the highest level of public service consistent with the prudent use of public funds.

DISCUSSION: In December 2019, Governor Ralph Northam announced a proposal to eliminate the Annual Vehicle Safety Inspections Program. According to the Virginia State Police, over eight million (8,209,716) vehicles were inspected in 2018 with over 20% (1,634,740) of those vehicles failing the safety inspection due to a critical safety defect. When considering that the average vehicle on the highway today is 11.8 years old, the importance of a safety inspection becomes even more important. Statistics from the Virginia State Police show that vehicles manufactured in 2009- 11 years ago- or earlier, fail their safety inspection 29% of the time.

According to a 2018 U.S. Department of Transportation study, both Virginia and Pennsylvania have a robust annual safety inspection program and are well below the national average of traffic deaths per 100,000 in population, at 9.6 and 9.3 fatalities respectively. This is well below the national average which is 11.17 per

100,000 population. To compare, South Carolina and Mississippi eliminated their safety inspection programs in 1995 and 2015 respectively. In the eleven years after South Carolina eliminated their safety inspection program, the state has experienced a 29.04% increase in traffic fatalities and Mississippi experienced an increase in traffic fatalities with 22.62 deaths per 100,000 in population since eliminating their state safety inspection program.

Statistics show that annual safety inspections help save lives on our highways. Motorist can take comfort in knowing that their vehicles and the over eight million other traveling vehicles alongside them have received a thorough inspection of all safety related components annually by a certified state inspector.

BUDGET IMPACT: None

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Board adopt the attached Resolution (Attachment A) to oppose legislation to eliminate Virginia's Motor Vehicle Safety Inspection Program.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A - Resolution