

HB 1583 -- Special License Plate Approval

Sponsor: Schlottach

This bill gives the Joint Committee on Transportation Oversight the duty of approving or denying a special license plate application submitted by the Department of Revenue.

The number of characters allowed on personalized plates is increased from six to seven, and the personalization fee is increased from \$15 to \$25.

The bill removes the special license plate exemption which allows organizations to forego the 100-applicant requirement by paying for the actual cost of the initial issuance.

Organizations, except those seeking a special military license plate, must submit an application to the department which:

- (1) Describes the proposed license plate;
- (2) Includes a list of at least 100 potential applicants; and
- (3) Includes an application fee, not to exceed \$5,000, to defray the department's cost for reviewing the application and developing the specialty license plate.

All moneys received by the department, excluding the special license plate fee, will be deposited in the Department of Revenue Specialty Plate Fund. The State Treasurer will be the custodian of the fund and will make disbursements for personal services, expenses, and equipment required to prepare, review, develop, and disseminate a new specialty plate and process the initial 100 applications. If the application is not approved by the joint committee, the State Treasurer will refund any deposits for that specialty plate.

The required documents and fees must be submitted to the department by July 1 prior to the next regular session of the General Assembly in order to be approved by the joint committee. If the special license plate application is approved, the sponsoring organization must submit the proposed art work to the department no later than 60 days after the approval. If the joint committee denies the application, 97% of the application fee will be refunded to the organization along with all submitted fees. The department must begin production and distribution of the new special license plates within one year after approval. The department is authorized to discontinue issuance of special license plates if the organization no longer provides services or has stopped issuing emblem-use authorization statements.

Any person or organization who receives a notice of denial for a special license plate may request a hearing to review the joint committee's decision within 15 days of receiving the notice.

The fee for all specialty license plates, except special military license plates, will be \$25 annually and \$50 biennially in addition to the regular registration fees.

The bill becomes effective January 1, 2005.