

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 344 (Delegate Rosenberg)
Economic Matters

Business Regulation - Sale of Motor Fuel - Pricing Signage

This bill alters the pricing signage requirements for retail service stations by requiring the prominent display of the standard price for motor fuel products; it also repeals existing signage requirements. Additionally, this bill authorizes the Comptroller to assess penalties for violations after a written warning and an opportunity to cure. **This bill takes effect on June 1, 2026.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill’s changes can be handled with existing budgeted resources. New penalty provisions are not expected to materially affect general fund revenues.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary:

Definitions

“Conditional price” means a price that is available to a customer only if a condition is met, including a service level, employment in a membership program, a required purchase, a payment method, or any other condition modifying the standard price.

“Standard price” means the offering price available to all customers without conditions.

Signage Requirements

A retail service station dealer must maintain a sign on the premises that (1) prominently displays clearly and visibly the standard price; (2) states the unit of measurement used; and (3) is positioned to be readable by passing motorists. The sign may also display clearly and visibly the standard price for diesel and other motor fuel products. If a sign displays a conditional price, the price may not be displayed more prominently than the standard price.

All numerals on the sign must be uniform, the same size, and at least 8 inches high and 3.5 inches wide with a brush stroke of at least 1 inch. Any numerals used in a fraction or letters on the sign must be at least one-third the height of the numerals used for whole numbers. If a new sign is needed to comply with the bill, the supplier of the gasoline must provide the sign and numerals at no cost to the service station dealer.

Violations and Penalties

The Comptroller is authorized to assess a person who violates the pricing signage regulations. For a first violation, the fine is \$100. For a second or subsequent violation, the fine is equal to the amount of the initial fine of \$100 multiplied by the total number of violations.

Before issuing a fine, the Comptroller must issue a written warning explaining the specific violation. The Comptroller must also provide the person with a reasonable opportunity to cure the violation. All fines collected under these provisions are paid to the general fund. Additionally, the bill requires the Comptroller to establish a process for individuals to report violations.

Current Law: Retail service stations (*i.e.*, retail businesses where motor fuel is sold) must meet various registration, inspection, and signage requirements. Under the Gas Price Clarity Act (House Bill 882 of 2024), stations are required to prominently display the credit and debit price (if higher than the cash price) or the credit and debit price and the cash price for a whole measurement unit of regular gasoline sold.

All dispensing equipment for motor fuel must be marked conspicuously to show in numerals of equal size the price (including taxes) of a gallon of the motor fuel offered for sale. If the price includes a fraction of a fractional, the combined height and width of the numerator and denominator must equal the height and width of the other whole numbers used.

Failure to comply with provisions related to the inspection and sale of motor fuel is a misdemeanor and is subject to a maximum penalty of a \$5,000 fine and/or one year imprisonment.

Generally, signs regulated by the above requirements (or other State law or by federal law) may be regulated by the local zoning authority and must be consistent with the local law, ordinance, or regulation governing signs. However, a sign required at a service station pursuant to the requirements above (or any other State or federal law) is exempt from the provisions of a local law, ordinance, or regulation for the purpose of determining (1) the total number of signs permitted and (2) the area of signs permitted.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced in the last three years.

Designated Cross File: SB 303 (Senator Kagan) - Finance.

Information Source(s): Comptroller's Office; Department of Legislative Services

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sj/mcr

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