

- Until the plate at least “breaks even”, counties, municipalities, and townships could realize a small loss in revenue received from the Auto Registration Distribution Fund since only money over and above the BMV’s operational costs are distributed back to local governments. After 1999, the Eastern Star plate could either begin to increase revenue going to the Auto Registration Distribution or be terminated if sales and renewals fell below 1,000 in consecutive years.

Detailed Fiscal Analysis

The bill provides for the issuance of special license plates which would be inscribed with the identifying words and figures of the Eastern Star organization. Such plates would be available for a fee of \$10 to compensate the BMV for the cost of issuing the plate, the regular \$20 license tax, and any local permissive tax.

According to law, after January 1, 1999 the plate must have 1,000 in new sales and renewals annually. Otherwise, after two years of less than 1,000 in sales and renewals, the plate would be terminated. Therefore, LBO can estimate with some certainty that after 1999 the Eastern Star plate should have at least 1,000 in sales and renewals, or none at all.

As of June 1997, the Eastern Star organization had just over 84,000 members, of which 1,400 have signed statements indicating that they intend to purchase the Eastern star plate (or 1.7% of the total membership). The Eastern Star organization is the sister organization to the Freemasons which have a total membership of about 149,000. There is currently a Freemason special license plate which had 3,035 in sales in 1996 (or about 2% of total membership). About 50% of men in the Freemasons have wives in Eastern Star.

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