

304. It shall be the duty of the Public Service Commission of Maryland, upon the application of any motor vehicle owner for a permit to operate any motor vehicle for the public transportation of passengers over any specified route, to investigate the expediency of granting said permit; the number of motor vehicles to be used, and the rate to be charged, and if, in the judgment of the Public Service Commission, it is deemed best for public welfare and convenience that said permit should be granted, said Public Service Commission is hereby empowered and authorized to grant such permit subject to such reasonable conditions and terms, and for such duration of time, not exceeding the period of twenty years, as it may deem advisable, provided, however, that permits to operate over the streets of the City of Baltimore shall not be granted for periods in excess of one year, except as hereinafter provided; and provided further, that if the applicant is directly, or is a subsidiary of a company, engaged in furnishing mass transportation in any incorporated municipality in the State of Maryland, by means of electric trolley cars, and operates or desires to operate motor vehicles, other than taxicabs, in connection with or as a service supplementary to a service by trolley cars, the Public Service Commission may grant such permits for a period not exceeding twenty-five years, except that a permit may be granted for a longer period where application is made for a permit to operate a motor vehicle or motor vehicles in substitution for the whole or any part of an electric trolley car franchise, easement or right-of-way originally granted by local authority or otherwise acquired for a duration longer than twenty-five years, in which event, upon the *proposed* abandonment or surrender of the whole or any part of such franchise, easement or right-of-way for the operation of electric trolley cars, the Public Service Commission is authorized and empowered to grant the permit or permits so applied for for the same duration as the franchise, easement or right-of-way which, or any part of which, is so abandoned, or surrendered; provided, however, that whenever a permit or permits are so granted [for a period or periods longer than one year], the service rendered under such permit or permits may not be discontinued without the consent of the Public Service Commission, ~~event~~ *EVEN though such permit or permits may expire as of a certain date under the terms thereof.* But if said Public Service Commission deems the granting of such permit prejudicial to the welfare and convenience of the public, then the said Public Service Commission is hereby