

May 1, 1963.

Honorable William S. James
President of the Senate
State House
Annapolis, Maryland

Dear Mr. President:

In accordance with the provisions of Article 2, Section 17, of the Maryland Constitution, I have today vetoed Senate Bill 320, and am returning this Bill to you accompanied by my veto message.

The Bill would require the State Auditor to compile information regarding motor vehicles purchased by the State for use by the various departments, agencies and boards. This information would include the propriety and necessity for use, the possible excessive use and the cost of operation. The Auditor would make his findings available to the Governor and General Assembly along with recommendations for controlling and curtailing the acquisition and use of such motor vehicles.

I can appreciate the desire on the part of members of the General Assembly to eliminate any unnecessary use of motor vehicles by State officials and employees. Certainly, every effort should be made to eliminate unnecessary cost wherever possible.

However, the State Auditor has advised me that the provisions of the Bill would add materially to the work load of his office. He further advises that if such an increase in the work load is not accompanied by provisions for an increase in his staff, the result will be a slowing down or reversal of the progress that is being made to place the work of this office on a current basis.

The Bill would also require the State Auditor to enter into three areas in which it has not functioned in the past:

1—The compilations of "cost of operation" statistics will require the accumulation of extensive data whereas, the function of the State Auditor's office in the past has been one of auditing the records of the other agencies of the State.

2—The determination of "the propriety and necessity for use" is an administrative function rather than one of fact finding and reporting to which the State Auditor's office has been restricted in the past.

3—The determination of "possible excessive use" would require the State Auditor's office to assume an investigative function in addition to examining financial records.

It should be pointed out that the Chief Deputy Comptroller is in agreement with the State Auditor regarding this Bill. It is his belief that the State Auditor should not be placed in the position of having to make expert findings in fields in which neither he nor his staff are qualified as experts.

The State Auditor is in the process of compiling a report regarding the number and use of State motor vehicles based on data furnished by the Vice-Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. This report will include certain recommendations regarding the various areas that should be considered in effecting satisfactory control over the cost and use of State automobiles.