

# HOUSE BILL 174

M1, R4

(PRE-FILED)

6lr1298  
CF SB 145

---

By: **Delegate Cardin**

Requested: October 22, 2025

Introduced and read first time: January 14, 2026

Assigned to: Judiciary

---

## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Motor Vehicles and Marine Vessels – Transfer-on-Death Designations**

3 FOR the purpose of authorizing an individual who is the sole owner of a marine vessel or  
4 multiple individuals who co-own a marine vessel under certain ownership  
5 registrations to apply to the Department of Natural Resources to designate a  
6 beneficiary to take ownership of the marine vessel on the death of the owner or each  
7 co-owner; altering certain provisions of law governing the transfer-on-death  
8 designation for motor vehicles to allow multiple individuals who co-own a motor  
9 vehicle under certain ownership registrations to designate a transfer-on-death  
10 beneficiary; and generally relating to transfer-on-death beneficiaries for motor  
11 vehicles and marine vessels.

12 BY adding to

13 Article – Natural Resources  
14 Section 8–720.1  
15 Annotated Code of Maryland  
16 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

17 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

18 Article – Transportation  
19 Section 13–115  
20 Annotated Code of Maryland  
21 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

22 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
23 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

24 **Article – Natural Resources**

---

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



**8-720.1.**

(A) AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS THE SOLE OWNER OF A VESSEL OR MULTIPLE INDIVIDUALS WHO CO-OWN A VESSEL AS JOINT TENANTS WITH RIGHT OF SURVIVORSHIP OR TENANTS BY THE ENTIRETY MAY APPLY TO THE DEPARTMENT TO DESIGNATE A BENEFICIARY TO TAKE OWNERSHIP OF THE VESSEL ON THE DEATH OF THE SOLE OWNER OR THE LAST SURVIVING CO-OWNER.

(B) THE DESIGNATION OF A BENEFICIARY MAY BE SHOWN BY THE WORDS "TRANSFER-ON-DEATH" OR THE ABBREVIATION "TOD" AFTER THE NAME OF THE REGISTERED OWNER ON A CERTIFICATE OF TITLE.

(C) (1) THE DESIGNATION OF A BENEFICIARY FOR A VESSEL DOES NOT AFFECT THE OWNERSHIP OF THE VESSEL UNTIL THE DEATH OF THE SOLE OWNER OR THE LAST SURVIVING CO-OWNER OF THE VESSEL.

(2) THE DESIGNATION OF A BENEFICIARY MAY BE REVOKED OR CHANGED AT ANY TIME BEFORE THE DEATH OF THE SOLE OWNER OR THE LAST SURVIVING CO-OWNER WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE BENEFICIARY BY APPLYING TO THE DEPARTMENT.

(D) THE DESIGNATION OF A BENEFICIARY IS NOT REQUIRED TO BE SUPPORTED BY CONSIDERATION AND THE CERTIFICATE OF TITLE OF THE VESSEL FOR WHICH THE DESIGNATION IS MADE IS NOT REQUIRED TO BE DELIVERED TO THE BENEFICIARY IN ORDER FOR THE DESIGNATION TO BE EFFECTIVE.

(E) ON THE DEATH OF THE SOLE OWNER OR THE LAST SURVIVING CO-OWNER OF A VESSEL WHO HAS DESIGNATED A BENEFICIARY, OWNERSHIP OF THE VESSEL SHALL PASS TO THE BENEFICIARY IF THE BENEFICIARY SURVIVES THE SOLE OWNER OR THE LAST SURVIVING CO-OWNER.

(F) (1) A DESIGNATED BENEFICIARY WHO SURVIVES THE SOLE OWNER OR THE LAST SURVIVING CO-OWNER SHALL APPLY TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR A NEW CERTIFICATE OF TITLE FOR THE VESSEL.

(2) AN APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF TITLE BY A BENEFICIARY FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF THE SOLE OWNER OR LAST SURVIVING CO-OWNER SHALL INCLUDE:

(I) THE ORIGINAL CERTIFICATE OF TITLE DESIGNATING THE BENEFICIARY;

1                   **(II) A DEATH CERTIFICATE FOR THE DECEASED SOLE OWNER**  
2 **OR EACH DECEASED CO-OWNER;**

3                   **(III) PROOF OF THE IDENTITY OF THE BENEFICIARY; AND**

4                   **(IV) ANY APPLICABLE TAXES OR FEES.**

5           **(G) IF A DESIGNATED BENEFICIARY DOES NOT SURVIVE THE DEATH OF THE**  
6 **SOLE OWNER OR LAST SURVIVING CO-OWNER, THE VESSEL IS PART OF THE ESTATE**  
7 **OF THE DECEASED OWNER OR LAST SURVIVING CO-OWNER.**

8           **(H) THIS SECTION DOES NOT LIMIT THE RIGHTS OF CREDITORS OF VESSEL**  
9 **OWNERS AGAINST BENEFICIARIES AND OTHER TRANSFEREES UNDER OTHER LAWS**  
10 **OF THE STATE.**

11           **(I) THE DEPARTMENT MAY CHARGE A FEE, NOT TO EXCEED ITS COSTS, FOR**  
12 **ISSUING A CERTIFICATE OF TITLE UNDER THIS SECTION.**

13           **(J) THE DEPARTMENT MAY ADOPT REGULATIONS TO CARRY OUT THIS**  
14 **SECTION.**

15                                   **Article – Transportation**

16 13–115.

17           (a) An individual who is the sole owner of a motor vehicle **OR MULTIPLE**  
18 **INDIVIDUALS WHO CO-OWN A MOTOR VEHICLE AS JOINT TENANTS WITH RIGHT OF**  
19 **SURVIVORSHIP OR TENANTS BY THE ENTIRETY** may apply to the Administration to  
20 designate a beneficiary to take ownership of the motor vehicle on the death of the **SOLE**  
21 **owner OR THE LAST SURVIVING CO-OWNER.**

22           (b) The designation of a beneficiary may be shown by the words  
23 “transfer-on-death” or the abbreviation “TOD” after the name of the registered owner on  
24 a certificate of title.

25           (c) (1) The designation of a beneficiary for a motor vehicle does not affect the  
26 ownership of the motor vehicle until the death of the **SOLE owner OR THE LAST**  
27 **SURVIVING CO-OWNER** of the motor vehicle.

28           (2) [The owner of a motor vehicle may cancel or change the designation of  
29 a beneficiary at any time] **THE DESIGNATION OF A BENEFICIARY MAY BE REVOKED OR**  
30 **CHANGED AT ANY TIME BEFORE THE DEATH OF THE SOLE OWNER OR THE LAST**  
31 **SURVIVING CO-OWNER** without the consent of the beneficiary by applying to the  
32 Administration.

(d) The designation of a beneficiary is not required to be supported by consideration, and the certificate of title of the motor vehicle for which the designation is made is not required to be delivered to the beneficiary in order for the designation to be effective.

(e) On the death of the **SOLE owner OR THE LAST SURVIVING CO-OWNER** of a motor vehicle who has designated a beneficiary, ownership of [a] **THE** motor vehicle shall pass to the beneficiary if the beneficiary survives the **SOLE owner OR THE LAST SURVIVING CO-OWNER**.

(f) (1) A designated beneficiary who survives the **SOLE owner OR THE LAST SURVIVING CO-OWNER** shall apply to the Administration for a new certificate of title for the motor vehicle.

(2) An application for a certificate of title by a beneficiary following the death of the **SOLE owner OR LAST SURVIVING CO-OWNER** shall include:

(i) The original certificate of title designating the beneficiary;

(ii) A death certificate for the deceased **SOLE owner OR EACH DECEASED CO-OWNER**;

(iii) Proof of the identity of the beneficiary; and

(iv) Any applicable taxes or fees.

(g) If a designated beneficiary does not survive the death of the **SOLE owner OR LAST SURVIVING CO-OWNER**, the motor vehicle is part of the estate of the deceased owner **OR LAST SURVIVING CO-OWNER**.

(h) This section does not limit the rights of creditors of motor vehicle owners against beneficiaries and other transferees under other laws of this State.

(i) The Administration may charge a fee, not to exceed its costs, for issuing a certificate of title under this section.

(j) The Administration may adopt regulations to carry out this section.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2026.