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## New Maryland tag: Star-spangled yuck

Maryland recently changed its standard license plates to introduce a design commemorating the War of 1812. Donna Beth Joy Shapiro of Baltimore is among those who are not proudly hailing the new tags.



I've had vanity tags for 20+ years on every daily driver and antique and/or pleasure vehicle. Now that the MVA has dumped Maryland's black-on-white plate - definitely the perfect canvas for a vanity tag - in favor of the Star Spangled Banner plate as the new standard, certainly I am not the only Marylander who will no longer gladly fork over the vanity plate surcharge to adorn our beloved rides. I am curious how many fewer vanity tags on average have been ordered since the switch. Also, who are the public officials (with email addresses, if possible) that might be best contacted?

I liked the dilemma of choosing between the old standard and the agricultural license plate designs for my CHEVRE (French for goat or goat cheese) tag (though, as usual, I went with the serene uncluttered look). The Star Spangled Banner plate is wonderful as an option, but it never should have replaced the perfect (sorry to repeat myself, but there's no other way to describe it) license plate design.

In case you are curious just how bad, cluttered, or possibly inappropriate a vanity statement can look on the Star Spangled Banner, agricultural, and Chesapeake Bay plates, please go to [https://secure.marylandmva.com/emvaservices/VRR/Create\\_Plate.asp](https://secure.marylandmva.com/emvaservices/VRR/Create_Plate.asp)

Thanks in advance for your help and your reply.

Best,  
Donna Beth Joy Shapiro

I can think of nobody better to register complaints with than John T. Kuo, head of the Motor Vehicles Administration, at [jkuo@marylandmva.com](mailto:jkuo@marylandmva.com).

UPDATE: According to MVA spokesman Buel Young, the new plates made their debut in mid-June. He said that from June 14 to June 30, the MVA sold 454 vanity plates. For May 14-30, it was 334. So it appears that vanity is still alive and well in Maryland.

Certainly one month does not a trend make. And even the ugliest plate in the world can probably sell when it's brand new. But so far, no evidence it's a drag on sales.