

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2015 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
Revised

Senate Bill 802

(Senator Cassilly, *et al.*)

Finance

Environment and Transportation

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Transportation - Dedication of Structures (Hero's Highway Act)

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This bill requires the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to establish a process that allows a member of the General Assembly, another elected official, or any member of the general public to request that MDOT dedicate a bridge or other appropriate structure to (1) a deceased member of the U.S. Armed Forces whose surviving spouse, parent, or next of kin is a recipient of the U.S. Department of Defense Gold Star memorializing that the member was killed in action or (2) a firefighter, a law enforcement officer, or another emergency responder who died in the line of duty.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** State finances are not materially affected, as the bill generally codifies current practice.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Current Law/Background:** The Maryland Transportation Commission (MTC) must consider and recommend any request for the dedication of transportation facilities in memory or honor of individuals or groups of significance to the State. MTC may consider and recommend approval of those requests for dedications that are made for (1) a distinguished individual who is deceased or retired from public or community service and who is widely recognized and renowned for service that has been characterized by exceptional achievement (*i.e.*, Governor Ritchie); (2) groups or associations with special relevance for Maryland (*i.e.*, Maryland Veterans); or (3) aspects of life or areas which are unique to Maryland (*i.e.*, “Chesapeake”).

When considering a dedication request, MTC must consider whether the request meets highway safety requirements and whether the dedication is for (1) a distinguished individual who is recently deceased or retired from public or community service and who is widely recognized and renowned for service that has been characterized by exceptional service or (2) an individual who sacrificed his or her well-being and life in service to our nation, State, and/or communities.

Upon receiving direction, either from the Secretary of Transportation or as the result of enacted legislation, the State Highway Administration or the Maryland Transportation Authority is required to dedicate a facility.

Preferred facilities to be considered for dedication include, but are not limited, to rest areas, visitor centers, and buildings. The dedication may be indicated by a plaque or similar type of commemoration marker. Sections of highway, tunnels, and bridges may be considered for dedication where appropriate, subject to safety and other roadway-related considerations.

MDOT advises that the total cost to dedicate a structure is about \$2,000. This includes \$1,000 to purchase a customized plaque and \$1,000 in labor costs to install the plaque.

The contribution of the U.S. Armed Forces is recognized through several provisions within the Maryland Vehicle Law. Specifically, Maryland has (1) exemptions from registration fees for veterans with certain disabilities and vehicles owned by national veterans' organizations and (2) special registration plates for honorably discharged veterans; recipients of individually earned, combat-related, U.S. Armed Forces medals; and recipients of a U.S. Department of Defense Gold Star indicating status as a surviving spouse, parent, or next of kin of a member of the U.S. Armed Forces who lost his/her life in combat.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** HB 466 (Delegate Folden, *et al.*) - Environment and Transportation.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 27, 2015  
md/lgc Revised - Senate Third Reader - March 25, 2015  
Revised - Enrolled Bill - April 27, 2015

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