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February 6, 2020

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve  
Chairman, House Environment and Transportation Committee  
251 House Office Building  
Annapolis MD 21401

**Re: *Letter of Support - House Bill 162 - Potomac River Bridges Towing Compact –  
Inclusion of Additional Bridges***

Dear Chairman Barve and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) supports House Bill 162, which would amend the existing Potomac River Bridges Towing Compact to add the Governor Harry W. Nice/Senator Thomas “Mac” Middleton Bridge (US 301), Sandy Hook Bridge (US 340), Brunswick Bridge (MD 17/VA 287), and Point of Rocks Bridge (US 15).

Maryland has an existing towing compact with Virginia and Washington, D.C. which addresses the need for concurrent law enforcement jurisdiction to facilitate the speedy clearance of disabled vehicles on most bridges that cross the Potomac River between jurisdictions. The current compact includes the following bridges: the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge, Rochambeau Memorial Bridge, George Mason Memorial Bridge, Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bridge, Francis Scott Key Bridge, Chain Bridge, and American Legion Bridge.

House Bill 162 simply adds the Governor Harry W. Nice/Senator Thomas “Mac” Middleton Bridge, Sandy Hook Bridge, Brunswick Bridge, and Point of Rocks Bridge are not included in the existing towing compact, bringing them into line with the other Potomac River bridges. Maryland law enforcement already crosses into neighboring jurisdictions on these four bridges to perform their duties to facilitate incident management. Amending the Compact would extend important legal protections to Maryland law enforcement personnel.

The Virginia legislature unanimously approved similar legislation which was signed into law by Governor Northam in March of last year. The District of Columbia currently has similar legislation pending before its City Council. Lastly, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments recommended updating this agreement as the first recommendation in the November 2018 report of its Traffic Incident Management Enhancement (TIME) Task Force.

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For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the Committee grant House Bill 162 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

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