
March 5, 2020

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

Re: Letter of Information – House Bill 1432 – Chesapeake Bay Transportation Network

Dear Chairman Barve and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 1432 but offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

House Bill 1432 requires the MDOT Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA) to study the feasibility of using the Chesapeake Bay and its navigable waters as a water transportation network, linking waterfront communities with high-speed water taxis to transport residents to services along the Bay. The bill requires a report be submitted to the General Assembly on or before July 1, 2022, outlining potential facilities and a cost estimate.

It is estimated that the study requirements outlined in House Bill 1432 would cost approximately \$1 million to conduct. MDOT, along with local governments, metropolitan planning organizations, and other interested stakeholders, develops its annual statewide capital program based on criteria aimed at preserving investments, enhancing transportation services, and improving accessibility and mobility throughout the State. This is achieved through extensive consideration of all statewide needs and priorities, and by considering a multitude of criteria, including federal and legal mandates, statewide goals, federal match requirements, State plans and objectives, existing project commitments and agreements, and local and regional priorities and plans, as well as available funding. This bill arbitrarily selects one particular project to receive transportation funding and is out of step with the collaborative process used to develop the Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP).

In the past two decades, Maryland has undertaken numerous feasibility and technical planning studies to investigate a possible cross-bay ferry service, assessing the latest technologies, trends, and public opinions. These studies identified several potential routes and terminals and determined that additional roadway capacity will need to be provided, as would access to terminal parking areas. Public subsidy would likely be necessary to ensure a successful ferry service; areas that provide this service ordinarily have a special tax to pay for it.

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For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating House Bill 1432.

Respectfully submitted,

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