

SB422 - Maryland Motor Truck Association - Support

Uploaded by: Champion, Louis

Position: FAV



Maryland Motor Truck Association

9256 Bendix Road, Suite 203, Columbia, MD 21045

Phone: 410-644-4600 Fax: 410-644-2537



HEARING DATE: February 17, 2021

BILL NO/TITLE: Senate Bill 422: Maryland Transportation Authority - Vehicle Not Using Bridge - No Toll Payment Required

COMMITTEE: Senate Finance Committee

POSITION: Support

Purpose: Senate Bill 422 would prevent the Maryland Transportation Authority from charging a toll to a vehicle that passes through a toll bridge plaza, but does not actually cross the bridge.

Maryland Motor Truck Association understands that truck movements sometimes contribute to traffic conflicts and road maintenance concerns - particularly where residential and industrial properties are in close proximity. When possible we support buffer areas between industrial zones and residential communities. Many of the industries we serve operate 24 hours a day; yet, also fashion numerous local jobs and generate millions of dollars in economic activity.

One area where no such buffer exists is in Dundalk. For decades there have been residential concerns about truck traffic and discussions about how to divert traffic to alternate routes. Over the years, many of the routes that were previously used by trucks were sacrificed by the industry to maintain a positive relationship with the communities surrounding them. The trucking industry does not support any effort to further limit truck access in the region, or to force industry on to alternate routes because those routes often involve additional mileage or the paying of a toll. This legislation attempts to overcome one of those challenges by addressing a concern at the I-695 toll plaza whereby trucks from Broening Highway that want to access the outer loop of I-695 are forced to pay the toll even though they do not ever cross the Key Bridge.

With the implementation of cashless tolling at the Key Bridge, there is a great chance to relocate the gantry and remove the toll for the Broening Highway access road.

The Maryland Transportation Authority previously attempted to address this issue by decreasing the toll rate for vehicles with 3 or more axles that are completing this movement. However, MMTA believes this option is not attractive to the majority of trucks leaving the Port. The primary reason for this is that most of the drivers operating at the Port of Baltimore are independent owner operators. They are highly unlikely to pay any toll for the ability to access this route.

The passage of Senate Bill 422 would open up a safer, more efficient and more environmentally friendly route to the trucking industry, thereby providing drivers with a viable and practical alternative to the local routes in the area. For that reason we ask for a favorable report.

About Maryland Motor Truck Association: Maryland Motor Truck Association is a not-for-profit trade association representing the trucking industry since 1935. In service to its 1,000+ members, MMTA is committed to supporting and advocating for a safe, efficient and profitable trucking industry across all sectors and industry types, regardless of size, domicile or type of operation.

For further information, contact: Louis Campion, (c) 443-623-4223

Ltr to Committee.pdf

Uploaded by: salling, johnny

Position: FAV

JOHNNY RAY SALLING
Legislative District 6
Baltimore County

Budget and Taxation Committee

Public Safety, Transportation,
and Environment Subcommittee



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 321
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3587 · 301-858-3587
800-492-7122 Ext. 3587
JohnnyRay.Salling@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 15, 2021

Senate Finance Committee

Re: SB 422 MTA – Vehicle Not Using Bridge – No Toll Payment Required

Position: Favorable

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

Thank you for accepting this letter of support for SB 422. This bill would address specific concerns regarding the I-695 toll plaza where vehicles travelling from Broening Highway that want to access the outer loop of I-695 are required to pay a toll even though they do not go across the Francis Scott Key Bridge.

The local streets on which these heavy trucks are travelling are not prepared for the size and weight of these trucks. Their constant passage over these roads causes premature wear which puts a strain on our county finances. There is also a safety issue as the size and weight of these trucks means it takes longer for them to stop. One of the regular bypass routes these trucks take goes right past a school. Safety is an issue with these trucks driving through our local streets.

Vehicles that are not traversing the Francis Scott Key Bridge should not have to pay a toll and continuing to charge the toll only brings these heavy trucks onto our residential streets. These are streets that are not designed for large trucks. By eliminating the tolling for these trucks that do not cross the bridge, we are saving companies and truck drivers from unnecessary expenses, keeping our residential roads from unnecessary wear and protecting our children, schools, and citizens from unnecessary safety hazards. This bill will provide a more direct route, protect the community, and provide businesses the economic freedom they need during this pandemic. For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on SB 422.

Sincerely,
Senator Johnny Ray Salling

new toll gantries.pdf

Uploaded by: salling, johnny

Position: FAV

1.

ALL VEHICLES
OVER 5T GVW
MUST USE
RIGHT LANE

2.

3.



SB422 - Support Testimony from Tradepoint Atlantic

Uploaded by: salling, johnny

Position: FAV

LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

To: Chairwoman Kelley & Members of the Senate Finance Committee

From: Aaron Tomarchio, EVP, Corporate Affairs

Re: **SUPPORT – SB422 – Maryland Transportation Authority – Vehicles Not Using Bridge – No Toll Payment Required**

TradePoint Atlantic (TPA), the owner, manager and developer of Sparrows Point, the former home of Bethlehem Steel in Southeast Baltimore County urges **SUPPORT for SB422**.

TPA has taken on the challenge to clean up and remediate the environmental impacts of a century of steel making, and prepare the site for re-development. It is our hope to remake Sparrows Point into a global center of excellence as a leading tri-modal transportation, distribution, manufacturing and logistics hub. The potential of this location represents a unique opportunity, and a proposition to the State of Maryland.

Low transportation costs and efficient roadway networks are the lifeblood of any port operation. To fully realize the economic development potential, a clean and reimagined Sparrows Point will bring to the State of Maryland, we must address a significant port related transportation impediment that has long been an issue in and around Baltimore's port and the greater Dundalk area.

Broening Highway functions as a key connector for the Port of Baltimore to the region's robust interstate network. Currently, as designed, to access the I-695 outer loop and points north on I-95, trucks coming from Dundalk and Seagirt terminals on Broening Highway utilize a loop road which passes through a tolling facility at the base of Key bridge without having crossed the bridge. This toll charge deters trucks from using this safer and intended route, thereby diverting heavy truck traffic onto local residential roads in the Dundalk area.

Connectivity between the Dundalk and Seagirt terminals is an important element to TPA's redevelopment strategy. Acting as an inland port to these terminals, TPA provides companies shipping in and out of the Port of Baltimore room to expand and grow capacity. In addition, enhanced connectivity to the container growth at Seagirt provides a logistical advantage for distribution and e-commerce facilities looking to locate to the region. Today, prospective new companies seeking to locate operations to the region site tolling at the Broening Highway and I-695 interchange as a problematic cost factor.

SB422 seeks to enhance connectivity in and around the Port of Baltimore by reducing transportation costs and improving public safety by incentivizing truck traffic to stay off local residential roads. According to a recent traffic simulation study conducted by the Baltimore Metropolitan Council's Port to Point workgroup, there is ample capacity with the current loop road configuration to meet future trips generated by TPA's eventual build out. With the elimination of tolling and available capacity at the existing loop road, the current Baltimore County transportation priority requesting a full interchange at Broening Highway will not be required, saving significant state resources and mitigating possible impacts to the neighboring Turner Station community.

During prior discussions on this issue, TPA was told that the implementation of all electronic tolling at the Key Bridge would provide an opportunity for MdTA officials to address tolling at the Broening Hwy toll facility. Specifically, tolling of traffic coming from Broening Highway onto I-695.

TPA is disappointed to learn that there have been no efforts and no communication to date by MdTA to address this issue. In fact, a separate tolling gantry was constructed on the Broening Highway loop road on-ramp at I-695 to collect a toll for port vehicles utilizing this interchange. This was an unfortunate and missed opportunity to rectify this issue.

We respectfully request the committee's **favorable report** and to act on this important regional economic development, transportation and safety issue. This is smart and prudent public policy.

About TradePoint Atlantic

The 3,300-acre industrial site in Baltimore, Maryland, offers a gateway to markets around the United States and the world, featuring a unique and unmatched combination of access to deep-water berths, rail and highways. Groundbreaking agreements signed with federal and state environmental regulators in 2014 to remediate the legacy from a century of steelmaking enable the redevelopment of the site with the potential to become one of North America's most strategic multi-modal, multi-commodity terminals. From here, world-class companies unleash their potential, jobs created, communities prosper, and industry is set in motion.

Contact:

Aaron Tomarchio, EVP, Corporate Affairs
atomarchio@tradepointatlantic.com | 443-299-9803

SB0422 - MDTA - Broening Turnaround - LOI_FINAL.pd

Uploaded by: Westervelt, Patricia

Position: INFO

February 17, 2021

The Honorable Delores G. Kelley
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

Re: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 422 – Maryland Transportation Authority – Vehicle Not Using Bridge – No Toll Payment Required

Dear Chair Kelley and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) take no position on Senate Bill 422 but offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

Senate Bill 422 would prohibit the MDTA from charging a toll when a customer chooses to travel through one of MDTA's toll facilities at a toll plaza adjacent to a bridge, but does not cross the bridge. The legislation further requires MDTA to construct a bypass or to reconstruct the existing interchange at Broening Highway to direct vehicles that do not traverse the Francis Scott Key (FSK) Bridge into a toll-free lane through the toll plaza.

The FSK facility is approximately 10.9 miles in length, extends from North Point Road to MD 10, and includes 22 other bridges, 7 small structures, 167 ancillary structures, and 38.5 lane miles of highway, all of which are currently maintained exclusively by toll dollars. Tolls are collected at the mid-point of the FSK facility on the Baltimore County side of the bridge. It is important to note that this toll is not incurred for passage of the Key Bridge, but rather for the use of the FSK facility. The day-to-day operations, including clearing accidents, debris, snow, as well as traffic enforcement, are paid for by the users of the 10.9 mile FSK facility, not just the FSK Bridge. The MDTA is entirely reliant on tolls collected from its users as the MDTA does not receive any state General Fund or Transportation Trust Fund dollars.

In January 2016, the MDTA reduced the toll charged to vehicles that only traverse the Bear Creek to \$2.00 per axle for 3+ axle vehicles, providing major savings to drivers of those vehicles. For example, the 3 axle rate for trucks was reduced from \$8 to \$6, providing a 25% reduction; the 4 axle rate for trucks was reduced from \$12 to \$8, providing a 33.3% reduction; the 5 axle rate for trucks was reduced from \$24 to \$10, providing a 58.3% reduction; and the 6 axle rate for trucks was reduced from \$30 to \$12, providing a 60% reduction.

Passage of Senate Bill 422 would grant free passage to users entering at the midpoint of the facility and using only the northern portion. Major projects totaling an estimated \$90 million are required within the next ten years to maintain the roadway and bridges on this portion of the facility in a state of good repair. The rates that are charged to the different classifications of vehicles are based on the wear and tear that is caused to the MDTA's facilities. Naturally, the weight of commercial vehicles results in more wear and tear to roads, which results in a higher toll rate per axle for commercial vehicles. If commercial vehicles were granted free passage along this part of the MDTA's FSK facility, the non-commercial (personal) vehicle owners would be forced to subsidize the costs of maintaining the MDTA's roadways resulting from the wear and tear caused by commercial vehicles.

The Honorable Delores G. Kelly
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Since 1971, the MDTA has been responsible for constructing, managing, operating and improving the State's eight toll facilities, as well as for financing new transportation projects under its purview (such as the Governor Harry W. Nice/Senator Thomas "Mac" Middleton Bridge in Charles County). In accordance with MDTA's Trust Agreement with bondholders, toll revenues are first pledged to pay debt service for bonds that are used to fund major transportation projects at existing and new facilities. The MDTA is governed by a 9-member board of directors with the Secretary of Transportation serving as Chair.

Passage of Senate Bill 422 would not only result in an annual revenue loss of approximately \$600,000 but may also be viewed as eroding the MDTA's statutory independence which could have a negative impact on the MDTA's strong credit ratings and could potentially result in credit rating reductions. The MDTA's credit ratings are among the highest granted for tolling authorities. Credit rating agencies have previously cited MDTA's independent ability to set toll rates, free of political consideration or approval from an outside source, as a key factor in achieving an optimal credit rating. In fact, other toll agencies such as the Miami-Dade County Expressway Authority (MDX) experienced bond ratings downgrades due to legislative interventions that interfered with its toll rate setting autonomy. A downgrade of MDTA's credit would lead to lower credit worthiness as well as higher financing rates for capital projects.

The Maryland Department of Transportation and the Maryland Transportation Authority respectfully request the Committee consider this information when deliberating Senate Bill 422.

Respectfully submitted,

Bradley Ryon
Manager, Government Relations
Maryland Transportation Authority
410-537-1060

Melissa Einhorn
State Legislative Officer
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1102