

## 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**

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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.

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