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Patrick Moran - President

**SB 117 - State Highway Administration - Litter Collection and Mowing
POSITION: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**

AFSCME Council 3 supports SB 117. This legislation requires the State Highway Administration (SHA) to collect litter and mow grass regularly and consistently along the State highways the agency is responsible for maintaining. At one time, state employees performed all this work. Over the years however, staffing has become so reduced that SHA began to rely increasingly on contractors to do this work which has led to disappointing results, less oversight, and cost inefficiencies. In March 2022, the Office of Legislative Audits published the results of a fiscal compliance audit for the agency and reported that,

“SHA did not publish certain contract awards on *eMaryland Marketplace Advantage (eMMA)* as required, including 3,114 snow removal contracts totaling \$316.4 million. Furthermore, SHA did not adequately safeguard vendor proposals submitted electronically for certain ongoing procurements expected to result in awards for an estimated 66 contracts for architectural and engineering services totaling \$411.8 million. In addition, certain SHA employees may have potentially violated State ethics laws by having relationships with certain contractors and SHA did not take permissible disciplinary actions against certain of these related contractors when their performance was determined to be unsatisfactory.”

SHA will certainly work to correct these issues, but they can be avoided by hiring more state employees to perform functions that do not need to be contracted out. SB 117 provides the perfect opportunity for this, as state employees were once performing these functions as part of their regularly assigned duties when they had enough staff to do so.

We recommend SB 117 be amended to reflect the following:

On pg. 2 of the bill:

Cut all of subsection (b) and replace it with, **“The Administration shall hire any additional staff necessary to carry out the provisions of this section.”**

We request a favorable report on SB 117 with this amendment. Thank you.

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