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February 15, 2024

The Honorable C.T. Wilson  
Chair, House Economic Matters Committee  
231 House Office Building  
Annapolis MD 21401

***RE: Letter of Support – House Bill 917 – Department of Transportation and Maryland Transportation Authority - Utilities Installation - Data Submission***

Dear Chair Wilson and Committee members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports House Bill 917 as it gives MDOT the tools to facilitate projects more quickly and cut down on project delays due to utility work.

House Bill 917 requires utility owners to report the georeferenced location data of aerial, surface, and subsurface utility facilities installed within the boundaries of all MDOT rights-of-way and owned or controlled real property for all new and relocated facilities to MDOT. The legislation also sets forth penalties for non-compliance, which includes removal of facilities for which data was improperly submitted and denial of future permits.

A centralized database of location data of utility accommodations within MDOT road, controlled access highway, and rail rights-of-way, facilities, extra, and excess land is critical to minimizing the potential impacts on future MDOT projects; avoiding costly right-of-way restoration; reducing intrusive utility maintenance operations; and eliminating unnecessary disruptions to the traveling public. These factors contribute to the overall cost to construct and maintain both transportation and utility infrastructures. Providing this level of coordination early and often during projects will help identify and resolve issues as early as possible; facilitate timely utility relocations; and ultimately minimize the overall project costs to the MDOT, utility companies, and the public.

It is important to note that a majority of utility companies are already collecting location data of their facilities. Sharing data with MDOT will improve coordination with our utility partners and ensure efficient project schedules, while also reducing the risk of increased costs.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee grant House Bill 917 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

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