
January 14, 2025

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Letter of Support – Senate Bill 203 – Vehicle Laws – Exceptional Hauling Permits for Farm Products

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports Senate Bill 203 and offers the following information for the Committee’s consideration.

Senate Bill 203 will reduce the administrative burden for permit applicants and the State Highway Administration (SHA) as it relates to obtaining and issuing exceptional hauling permits for field-loaded agricultural products, defined in Transportation Article §24-113.2. Additionally, SB 203 increases the maximum gross weight of a vehicle operating under an exceptional hauling permit with at least five axles from 87,000 pounds to 88,000 pounds.

Under current law, the administrative requirements associated with the issuance of hauling permits for field-loaded agriculture products are excessively burdensome and difficult for the SHA to track and enforce. SB 203 would create a simplified permitting application and issuance process which reflects continuity with existing permits that have been vetted over extended periods of time for safety and renewal.

The SHA believes that the amendments proposed to Transportation Article §24-113.2 in SB 203 would promote compliance with permitting requirements for farm-loaded agricultural products, which improves the accuracy of hauling data and allows SHA to better document route and regional infrastructure usage. This data is critical for SHA’s asset management and system preservation program.

The Exceptional Hauling Permit would be inclusive of all field loaded farm products as defined in Agricultural Article §10-601(c). Farm products as defined in current statute include any agricultural, horticultural, vegetable, or fruit product of the soil, including livestock, meats, marine food products, poultry, eggs, dairy products, wool, hides, feathers, nuts, honey, and every product of farm, forest, orchard, garden or water.

Senate Bill 203 does not alter existing hauling permit fees. SHA anticipates a moderate increase in issued hauling permits; however, it does not expect a significant financial impact. Therefore, there are no anticipated impacts to revenues to the Transportation Trust Fund from the bill changes.

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The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee grant Senate Bill 203 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

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