

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2010 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Revised

Senate Bill 650

(Senator Pipkin)

Finance

Ways and Means

**Maryland Transportation Authority - Proposed Toll or Fee Charges - Public
Comments**

This bill requires the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) to submit a report to MDTA members, make the report available online, and make specified public comments available to MDTA members at least 10 working days prior to a vote by MDTA to implement a proposal to fix or revise tolls, fees, or other charges on any part of a transportation facilities project.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill's requirements can be absorbed within existing MDTA resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: Established in 1971 as an independent, nonbudgeted State agency, MDTA manages, operates, and maintains the State's seven toll facilities (four bridges, two tunnels, and one highway) and provides law enforcement for these facilities, as well as Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport and the Port of Baltimore. Toll revenues and bonds are used to finance these projects.

The Secretary of Transportation serves as the chairman of MDTA. In addition to the chairman, MDTA consists of eight members appointed by the Governor with Senate advice and consent.

MDTA has the authority to set tolls on transportation facilities projects under its supervision. Tolls must provide funds that, when combined with bond proceeds and other available revenues, are sufficient to pay maintenance, repair, and operating costs for transportation facilities projects that are not otherwise paid for; pay the interest and principal of any outstanding bond issues; create reasonable reserves for these purposes; and provide funds for the cost of replacements, renewals, and improvements.

Prior to increasing a toll, current regulations require that MDTA provide 60-days public notice, take public comments for a period of at least 60 days, and accept oral comments during at least one public meeting held during the public comment period. The Executive Secretary of MDTA must submit a report to the members on the nature of the public comments received.

Background: The most recent sets of MDTA toll increases occurred in 2009, 2003, and 2001. In 2009, when MDTA made changes to toll rates and E-ZPass service charges, approximately 22,000 written public comments were received.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Transportation Authority, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 28, 2010
mpc/lgc Revised - Senate Third Reader - March 29, 2010

Analysis by: Amanda Mock

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510