

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2010 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 1392 (Delegate McDonough, *et al.*)
Environmental Matters

Transportation - Bridges Over State Highways - Memorials to Fallen Heroes

This bill authorizes the Governor to post a sign or plaque on any bridge spanning a road or street that crosses a State highway as a memorial dedicated to a fallen hero. The sign must be visible to travelers on the road or street that crosses the State highway, and on the State highway. The Governor must select each fallen hero to be honored under the bill.

A fallen hero means a resident of the State who died in the line of duty while serving the State or a local government of the State as a law enforcement officer, firefighter, first responder, or as a member of the armed forces of the United States in a warzone.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Special fund expenditures increase by \$7,200 to purchase the necessary signs for each bridge dedicated as a memorial to a fallen hero.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The State Highway Administration (SHA) follows the specifications and guidelines for traffic that are contained in the nationally recognized *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* published by the U.S. Department of Transportation. While the manual notes legislative bodies will occasionally adopt an act or resolution memorializing or dedicating a highway, bridge, or other component of the highway, it suggests memorial or dedication signs should not appear on or along a highway, or be

placed on bridges or other highway components. Federal guidance indicates if a route, bridge, or highway component is officially designated as a memorial or dedication, and if notification of the memorial or dedication is to be made on the highway right-of-way, notification should consist of installing a memorial or dedication marker in a rest area, scenic overlook, recreational area, or other appropriate location where parking is provided with the signing inconspicuously located relative to vehicle operations along the highway. If the installation of a memorial or dedication marker off the main roadway is not practical, memorial or dedication signs may be installed on the mainline. Additionally, memorial or dedication signs should have a white legend and border on a brown background.

Although federal regulations do not prohibit memorial or dedication signs from appearing along a highway or other highway components, federal regulations require that memorial or dedication signs appearing on the highway must be rectangular, and must be limited to one sign at an appropriate location in each route direction, each as an independent sign installation. Regulations also require the legend displayed on the sign may only include certain information. Information that may not be included on a memorial or dedication sign, such as biographical information about the individual being memorialized, is also specified.

Background: SHA is responsible for more than 5,200 miles or approximately 16,800 lane miles of road, 2,500 bridges, 3,500 small stream crossing structures, and 80 miles of sound barriers. It also has responsibility for planning, designing, constructing, and maintaining these roads and bridges to safety and performance standards while considering sociological, ecological, and economic concerns.

Established in 1971 as an independent, nonbudgeted State agency, the Maryland Transportation Authority 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 for Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport and the Port of Baltimore. Toll revenues and bonds are used to finance these projects.

State Fiscal Effect: SHA advises each sign would cost approximately \$1,800 or \$3,600 per bridge for a sign in both directions. Two additional signs would also be required for a sign in both directions for the road or street that crosses a State highway. Therefore, for each bridge dedicated as a memorial to a fallen hero, special fund expenditures increase by \$7,200.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): U.S. Department of Transportation, Governor's Office, Maryland Department of Transportation, Maryland State Police, Department of Legislative Services

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mam/hlb

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