

Department of Legislative Services  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2023 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
 First Reader

House Bill 659 (Delegate Arentz, *et al.*)  
 Environment and Transportation

**Chesapeake Bay Bridge - Prohibition on Trailers in Contraflow Lanes - Study**

This bill requires the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to conduct a study on the implications and feasibility of prohibiting vehicles with a semitrailer, pole trailer, or trailer from using a contraflow lane on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. By December 31, 2023, MDOT must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2023, and terminates May 31, 2024.**

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** No effect in FY 2023. Nonbudgeted expenditures for the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) increase by \$175,000 in FY 2024 only. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
NonBud Exp.	0	175,000	0	0	0
Net Effect	\$0	(\$175,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0

*Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease*

**Local Effect:** Local governments can participate in the study as necessary and appropriate using existing budgeted resources.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal or none.

## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** In conducting the study, MDOT must consult with local officials and stakeholders that have expertise and familiarity with traffic safety issues faced by commuters who cross the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. The study must:

- estimate the number of vehicles with a semitrailer, pole trailer, or trailer that used a contraflow lane on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge over the last 10 years;
- analyze the hazards, incidents, and accidents involving vehicles with a semitrailer, pole trailer, or trailer that used a contraflow lane on the bridge over the last 10 years;
- analyze existing laws and regulations involving prohibitions on different types of vehicles in contraflow lanes;
- analyze the feasibility of installing a camera system that may be used to identify vehicles with a semitrailer, pole trailer, or trailer that use a contraflow lane on the bridge;
- analyze available safety measures to require vehicles with a semitrailer, pole trailer, or trailer to use only the far right lane on the bridge;
- recommend measures for requiring vehicles with a semitrailer, pole trailer, or trailer to use only the far right lane on the bridge; and
- recommend measures for penalizing vehicles with a semitrailer, pole trailer, or trailer that use a contraflow lane on the bridge.

**Current Law:** Since 1971, MDTA has been responsible for constructing, managing, operating, and improving the State's toll facilities (for example, the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, the Francis Scott Key Bridge, and the Intercounty Connector) and for financing new revenue-producing transportation projects.

**State Expenditures:** Even though the bill requires MDOT to conduct the study, this analysis assumes that MDTA does so, since MDTA is responsible for operating the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. In the execution of its duties, MDOT and MDTA often use consultants to handle complex research and planning studies, and MDTA anticipates engaging one of its consultants to complete the contraflow lane study required by the bill. Therefore, nonbudgeted expenditures for MDTA increase by \$175,000 in fiscal 2024 only to complete the required study.

**Additional Comments:** MDTA uses contraflow lanes to assist the flow of traffic across the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, allowing two-way traffic to take place along one of the spans during peak times for either east-bound or west-bound traffic. Historically, MDTA has had to manually open and close lanes for the two-way traffic; however, it is currently

implementing an [automated lane closure system](#) using overhead lane-use control signals, dynamic message signs, horizontal swing gates, and illuminated pavement markers.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 19, 2023  
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