

BILL NUMBER HB0038

BILL TITLE: Vehicle Laws - Failure to Pay Video Toll - Reform of Penalties

BILL CONTACT: Delegate Al Carr

POSITION: Support

February 6, 2020

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB0038

**Jill Hamilton
Legislative District 34B**

To The Honorable Kumar Barve, Chair, The Honorable Dana Stein, Vice Chair, and the Environment and Transportation Committee members,

My name is Jill Hamilton and I have an EZ Pass horror story. I drive from Harford County to Baltimore City for work and have used an EZ Pass transponder for 13 years. I love the ease and convenience of the EZ Pass. I signed up for a commuter plan to reduce costs for my daily travels to my place of employment.

My problems started when I began receiving notices that my EZ Pass was not registering at the toll. I went to the EZ Pass Customer Service Center on Frankfur Avenue. I am not sure what the problem was but I got a new EZ Pass and threw away the old EZ Pass.

I didn't understand the bill and thought I was being charged on both transponders. I didn't realize they had to deactivate the old transponder and transfer my commuter plan to the new EZ Pass transponder. I eventually had this fixed when I contacted customer service. I continued to use my new EZ Pass and I was still being charged the \$4.00 rate. I called once to go over my bill indicating I had a commuter plan – all travel with my EZ pass was for work. I was given a credit and told this was a courtesy. I got the next month's bill and same thing – a few \$4 charges. I called the EZ Pass customer service again and was given a credit for the incorrect charges.

This has caused unnecessary problems in my life. I have spent multiple hours trying to get my money back and going over a bill that is not easy to understand. I am not sure why it appears that I have multiple transponders. (I later learned this is for video tolls) Dealing with the customer service has been helpful, but I have spent countless hours rectifying this situation.

Before this happened, I didn't realize the commuter plan is not an automatic charge each time for the same amount. If the system does not read my EZ Pass for whatever reason, I am charged full price! I don't know how to change this as I slow down/stop when I go through the EZ Pass toll booth. I feel I must check my bill every month and call if it is incorrect to (hopefully) get my money back.

House Bill 38 is very important to fixing some of the problems associated with EZ Pass. Lowering the fine rate to be more reasonable will result in more people paying what they owe, and less people feeling like they were **taken advantage of by the state to generate revenue.**

In addition to the solutions it offers, I also believe the Maryland Transportation Authority should do everything it can to make sure drivers understand what is expected of them to stay in compliance and make access to doing those things more easily available.

One idea is letting drivers know the transponders have batteries that die and putting expiration dates on transponders. In addition, fix the toll booths so they can correctly charge customers the correct amount per transaction.

Sincerely,
Jill Hamilton
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