



Larry Hogan
Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford
Lt. Governor
Gregory Slater
Secretary

Office of the Secretary

March 5, 2020

The Honorable Kumar Barve
Chairman, House Environment
and Transportation Committee
251 House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis MD 21401

Dear Chairman Barve and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and contribute to the discussion regarding House Bill 38 (Vehicle Laws – Failure to Pay Video Toll – Reform of Penalties).

I have had the pleasure of working with many of you in my 22 years at the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT). For those of you who have worked with me in the past, you know my commitment to a collaborative, detail-oriented approach in solving problems that we face.

It is important to remember that the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) is an independent unit, separate from MDOT and governed by a nine-member Board of Directors with the Secretary of Transportation serving as Chair of the Board. The MDTA is entirely reliant on tolls collected from its users as the MDTA does not receive any State General Fund or Transportation Trust Fund dollars, and it is responsible for constructing, managing, operating, and improving the State's toll facilities, as well as for financing new transportation projects under its purview (such as the Harry W. Nice/Senator Mac Middleton Bridge in Charles County and the I-95 Express Toll Lanes north of Baltimore). In accordance with MDTA's Trust Agreement with bondholders, toll revenues are first pledged to pay debt service for bonds that are used to fund major transportation projects at existing and new facilities. For this reason, it is important that we are mindful to maintain MDTA's statutory independence.

As I have settled into this new role, I have learned that the MDTA has taken significant steps to improve its customer service, especially in the area of helping customers resolve their toll debts. The MDTA is committed to responding to customers and resolving any outstanding *EZ-Pass*® concerns.

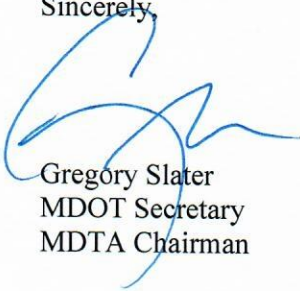
That said, since Governor Hogan nominated me for this new role, I have heard directly from constituents who have experienced issues resolving toll debt. To that end, I have directed MDTA Executive Director Jim Ports to lead an internal review of the current toll penalty structure and any steps the MDTA can take to improve customer service. We will report back to this Committee on or before December 1, 2020 on the results and any actions the MDTA Board has taken during the interim or will plan take in the future as a result of this commitment.

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I gave an assurance to all 47 Senators during my confirmation process, and I will reiterate this to you now. You can expect me to always be open, accessible, collaborative, and creative in finding solutions. I believe the best solutions are found with every voice at the table, coming together and sharing perspectives.

Thank you, and I look forward to continuing to work together on this and the many other issues that come before your Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gregory Slater', is written over the typed name and title.

Gregory Slater
MDOT Secretary
MDTA Chairman

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bcc: Thomas J. Curtin, Esq., Chief of Staff, MDOT
Ms. Erin Henson, Director, Office of Public Affairs, MDOT
Mr. R. Earl Lewis, Jr., Deputy Secretary of Policy, Planning, and Enterprise Services,
MDOT
Mr. James F. Ports, Jr., Executive Director, Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA)
Mr. Sean Powell, Deputy Secretary of Operations and Homeland Security, MDOT
Mr. Jeff Tosi, Director, Office of Government Affairs, MDOT