



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

February 11, 2020

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee
241 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 372 – Public Information Act – Required Denials for Specific Information – Sociological Information

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 372, but offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

MDOT takes seriously our commitment to being open, transparent, and collaborative with the public and communities we serve. Allowing the public to request and inspect documents under the Public Information Act (PIA) is a vital element of the public's trust in our governmental institutions. MDOT is committed to safeguarding, archiving, and maintaining public records as well as individual Personally Identifiable Information (PII), in accordance with all laws and regulations. MDOT works in good faith to provide timely and cost-efficient responses, while also balancing the legal and ethical obligations to protect personal and proprietary information. We are entrusted with millions of public records dispersed throughout the State and have established a robust records management program to maintain records while also ensuring transparency.

House Bill 372 amends the Public Information Act (PIA) to prohibit record custodians from defining "sociological information" to include a personal address.

MDOT is dedicated to protecting the privacy of Maryland citizens and the personal data we possess in order to conduct business with the public. Providing a personal address could disclose private sociological information that could result, for example, in unwanted targeting for commercial or business gain, revelations that an individual's personal address could be a residential mental health or rehabilitation facility, or unwanted exposure of a person in a domestic abuse situation. Current law precluding the release of this information serves the dual purpose of protecting individuals' privacy and reinforcing the public's trust in government to handle their personal information with the utmost discretion.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information as it deliberates House Bill 372.

Respectfully submitted,

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Maryland Department of Transportation
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