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January 28, 2020

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.  
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
2 East  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis MD 21401

***Re: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 173 – Vehicle Laws – Driver’s licenses Confiscated for Real ID Compliance – Failure to Possess or Display***

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) offers the following letter of information for the Committee’s consideration on Senate Bill 173.

Senate Bill 173 provides that an individual whose license has been confiscated by law enforcement within the previous 90 days for failure to submit documents required for a REAL ID compliant driver’s license, is not subject to the requirement to carry and display a license while driving a motor vehicle.

In late 2017, the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) directed MDOT MVA to ensure that all individuals who had the new driver’s license or identification card with the REAL ID star, but no documents on file, returned to MDOT MVA to present the required documents for scanning. This directive represented a significant change to the previous process which had been certified by DHS. MDOT MVA quickly implemented new systems and processes to accomplish this new requirement, starting with customers who needed to renew their driver’s license or identification card. When we began reaching out to those customers in December 2018 who had the driver’s license or identification card with the star, but no documents on file, there were over 1.1 million individuals who needed to provide the federally required documents. As of today, 380,000 customers need to submit the required documents, and many have deadlines in the upcoming months. Fewer than 4,700 customers have driver’s licenses or identification cards that are recalled and each of these individuals has received 18 notices via email or in writing, as well as at least one personal phone call from an MDOT MVA employee.

In August of 2019, Maryland became the first state in the nation to have its REAL ID program recertified by the DHS, affirming Maryland’s compliance with the federal REAL ID Act requirements. Currently, 61% of Maryland residents are REAL ID compliant, compared to 27% this time last year. Several months ago, DHS reported the nationwide average for compliance was 27%.

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MDOT MVA continues to focus on providing premier customer service to ensure Marylanders are able to become REAL ID compliant by the federal deadline of October 1, 2020. More than 28,000 appointments are available per week across Maryland, and three additional locations statewide have been opened for REAL ID appointments in Columbia, Parkville, and Walnut Hill. MDOT MVA remains acutely focused on continuing education and outreach to customers, including through direct mail and email, telephone campaigns, traditional and social media, and community events.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the Committee consider this information as it deliberates Senate Bill 173.

Respectfully submitted,

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