
January 30, 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 – Revised

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.

Maryland began issuing REAL ID licenses and identification cards in 2009 under a process that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) deemed compliant. At that time Maryland was only required to collect documentation from new drivers, while those renewing or obtaining a duplicate or corrected product could obtain a REAL ID without additional documentation.

In late 2017, 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 and is pleased to report the following progress:

- In December 2018, MDOT MVA began contacting customers with the driver’s license or identification card with the star, but no federally-required documents on file.
- At that time over 1.1 million individuals needed to provide the federally-required documents. In order to provide great service to all these customers, they were divided into groups, with the last deadlines extending into May.
- As of today, just over one year later, that number has been reduced to less than 380,000 customers. Over 700,000 customers have come into compliance.

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- Approximately 4,500 customers have driver's licenses or identification cards that are recalled and more people become compliant each day.
 - Each of these individuals with recalled products has received 18 notices via email or US mail, and at least one personal phone call from an MDOT MVA employee. MDOT MVA continues to reach out to them on a regular basis to bring every customer into compliance.
- Currently, 61% of Maryland residents are REAL ID compliant, compared to 27% this time last year. Just last week, DHS reported the nationwide average for compliance was 34%.
- In August 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.

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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