

July 30, 2020

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair
The Honorable Carol Krimm
Vice Chair
Transportation and Environment Subcommittee
6 Bladen Street, Room 210
Annapolis MD 21401

Dear Chair Korman and Vice Chair Krimm:

Thank you for contacting me regarding traffic congestion issues and telework during these unprecedented times. I appreciate the opportunity to update you.

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided an opportunity for MDOT, businesses, and other State agencies to observe changes in travel patterns and the resulting traffic conditions that previously could only be seen in traffic models. In April, during the peak of the stay-at-home order, traffic volumes statewide were down by over 50 percent when compared to the same period the previous year. As restrictions have been lifted and businesses have reopened, traffic volumes have steadily increased. Over this short-term, these volume reductions have reduced congestion in some areas, while traffic congestion in other areas still exists and the travel peaks are spread differently during the recovery.

The MDOT State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) uses a number of tools to measure and model traffic patterns. MDOT SHA has a long-standing relationship with the University of Maryland (UMD) Maryland Transportation Institute. Together, MDOT SHA and UMD have developed many of the traffic modeling programs used regionally in partnership with UMD, including the Maryland Statewide Transportation Model (MSTM), which the MDOT SHA Office of Planning and Preliminary Engineering (OPPE) maintains. Other valuable traffic modeling tools used by both MDOT SHA and UMD include dynamic traffic assignment (DTA) models, which cover the entire Washington, D.C.-Baltimore metropolitan region, and VISSIM models, which evaluate the impacts of volume changes on congestion levels along corridor-specific routes using detailed microscopic simulation.

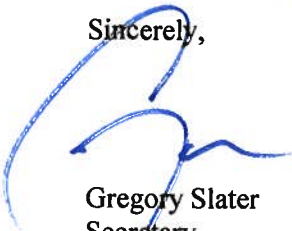
The telework patterns in the region and globally have demonstrated some interesting short-term changes to traffic patterns on the congested conditions around the state and elsewhere. I am working with my counterparts in Maryland's state agencies (e.g. the Maryland Departments of Environment, Commerce, General Services, and Budget & Management) and working to connect with local and regional businesses to better understand their experiences with telework, and what types of initiatives could encourage continued support for increased telework while maintaining, and even increasing productivity.

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Page Two

Supporting telework will continue as part of MDOT's approach to providing innovative, safe, reliable, and convenient transportation choices for all Marylanders. We look forward to sharing a dialogue about the benefits and impacts of increased telework, and are working with Appropriations Committee staff to schedule a briefing at your request.

Thank you again for contacting me. I appreciate hearing from you. If you have any additional questions or concerns ahead of our planned briefing, please contact Jeff Tosi will be happy to assist you.

Sincerely,



Gregory Slater
Secretary

cc: Ms. Lynda Eisenberg, Chair, Baltimore Regional Transportation Board
Ms. Kelly Russell, Chair, National Capital Regional Transportation Planning Board
Tim Smith, P.E., Administrator, MDOT SHA
Mr. Jeff Tosi, Director, Office of Government Affairs, MDOT