



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

February 25, 2021

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251 House Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

Re: Letter of Information – House Bill 1297 – State Highways – Designations – Thurgood Marshall Highway

Dear Chair Barve and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 1297 but offers the following information for the Committee’s consideration.

House Bill 1297 proposes requiring the MDOT State Highway Administration (SHA) to designate MD 210 as the Thurgood Marshall Highway. MD 210, known as Indian Head Highway, runs 20.86 miles from Potomac Avenue in the town of Indian Head, Maryland to the District of Columbia boundary in Forest Heights, Maryland. The road was named for the town of Indian Head, Maryland and is alternately a four and six lane divided highway along its length.

While House Bill 1297 does not clarify the exact meaning of “designate,” the potential renaming of a State highway or any public road poses challenges and costs including the following: difficulty in locating an emergency 911 services call based on an older road name, upgrading emergency and other government mapping systems, updating directional and other signage both along the highway and off-site, and confusion and potential costs with legal or real estate documents that reference a road name that may no longer exist. For these reasons, a dedication of a roadway or facility is preferable as it provides the visible honoring of an individual or entity by way of appropriate signage and avoids the previously enumerated concerns of a renaming.

MDOT has previously established policy and procedures by which roadways can be dedicated or named. The Maryland Transportation Commission (MTC) may be petitioned to recommend that a Maryland roadway or state-owned transportation facility be dedicated in honor of an individual or entity. This recommendation is then submitted to the Secretary of Transportation for a decision.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee carefully consider this information when deliberating House Bill 1297.

Respectfully submitted,

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