



February 23, 2022

Delegate Kumar P. Barve, Chair
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251 House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: HB 649 – LETTER OF INFORMATION – Environment – Discharge Permits –
Inspections and Administrative Continuations**

Dear Chair Barve and Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee:

The Maryland Transportation Builders and Materials Association (“MTBMA”) has been and continues to serve as the voice for Maryland’s construction transportation industry since 1932. Our association is comprised of 200 members. MTBMA encourages, develops, and protects the prestige of the transportation construction and materials industry in Maryland by establishing and maintaining respected relationships with federal, state, and local public officials. We proactively work with regulatory agencies and governing bodies to represent the interests of the transportation industry and advocate for adequate state and federal funding for Maryland’s multimodal transportation system.

House Bill 649 limits the period of time for which the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) can administratively continue a discharge permit from five years to three years in 2022, and then again from three years to one year in 2027. The bill also requires MDE to inspect the operations of each holder of an administratively continued permit at least once per month and outlines an administrative penalty schedule to be followed should a permit holder be found in significant noncompliance for the same underlying condition after two consecutive months of inspections. Finally, it requires MDE to request half the number of positions to complete these duties by December 31, 2024, with the balance to be requested by December 31, 2025.

Should this Committee desire to act on this bill, MTBMA requests a clarifying amendment regarding the definition of “administratively continued permit.” In the newly created Section 9-328.1(a) of the Environment Article of the Maryland Code, we ask that you make this a two-pronged test that excludes general stormwater discharge permits from these provisions. Thus, the new language would read:

“9-328.1.

(A) IN THIS SECTION, “ADMINISTRATIVELY CONTINUED PERMIT” MEANS A DISCHARGE PERMIT THAT:

(1) HAS BEEN ADMINISTRATIVELY CONTINUED UNDER DEPARTMENT REGULATIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH 40 C.F.R. § 122.6(D); AND

(2) IS NOT A GENERAL STORMWATER DISCHARGE PERMIT.”

MTBMA believes that this clarifying amendment would ensure that the focus of MDE’s enforcement efforts stays on those industries most responsible for the pollution that this bill is seeking to address.

We appreciate you taking the time to address this important issue and we respectfully present the above information and proposed amendment to House Bill 649 for your consideration.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Michael Sakata', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Sakata
President and CEO
Maryland Transportation Builders and Materials Association