



March 3, 2022

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

**Re: House Bill 1079 – Vehicle Emissions Inspection Program – Standards, Requirements, and Application**

Dear Chair Barve and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE or the Department) has reviewed HB 1079 entitled, *Vehicle Emissions Inspection Program-Standards, Requirements, and Application*, and would like to provide information regarding this legislation.

The Vehicle Emissions Inspection Program (VEIP) is an effective program that was extremely critical in keeping vehicles built before modern computer controls running cleanly. The vast majority of vehicles in Maryland are now newer, cleaner vehicles equipped with advanced technology on-board diagnostic (OBD) emissions control systems. Additionally, Maryland's air quality has become drastically cleaner since VEIP's inception in the 1980s. Maryland is now meeting all federal air quality standards, except for the federal ozone standard, and is very close to achieving the ozone standard as well. Maryland meets the ozone level in most of the state, and exceedances of the ozone standard occur on a small number of days in isolated locations. These advancements in vehicle technology and our significant air quality progress are enabling a modernization of the VEIP in a way that will improve customer convenience and continue air quality progress.

In December 2021, MDE and the Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration submitted a report required by Chp. 670 (HB 44) of 2021.<sup>1</sup> This report shared the agencies' perspective on modernization of the VEIP, including the implementation of an OBD-only testing program. OBD systems are present on model year 1996 and newer vehicles. Section 23-202(b)(1) of HB 1079 retains the requirement to perform VEIP testing of all subject vehicles of model year 1977 and newer, creating a conflict with the OBD-only testing amendments of section 23-202(b)(4)(i). The agencies' perspective is to limit the vehicles tested to those equipped with OBD systems, which aligns with the amendments to 23-202(b)(4)(i).

VEIP modernization also includes increasing the time before which a new vehicle is required to receive its VEIP test. In the past, this delay in initial testing was determined based on the model year of the vehicle. Over the years, the term "model year" has come to have different interpretations depending on the application. For clarity and consistency, expressing the initial delay in testing in terms of months of age, such as until the vehicle is at least 72 months of age, is better suited for this application.

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<sup>1</sup> MSAR #13247 – VEIP Modernization Report: A Report to the Maryland General Assembly, Senate Finance Committee, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, House Environment and Transportation Committee, and House Appropriations Committee, December 2021.

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Thank you for your consideration. We will continue to monitor HB 1079 during the Committee's deliberations, and I am available to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me at 410-260-6301 or [tyler.abbott@maryland.gov](mailto:tyler.abbott@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tyler Abbott", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the left.

Tyler Abbott

cc: George "Tad" Aburn, Director, Air and Radiation Administration