



## **AAA Mid-Atlantic's Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 29 Vehicle Laws – Failure to Pay Video Toll – Penalties**

*Sponsor: Delegate Al Carr*

- AAA Mid-Atlantic supports **House Bill 29**, which repeals the authority of the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) to suspend the registration of a motor vehicle because the registered owner of the vehicle incurred a toll violation and failed to pay the toll and any associated civil penalties.
- Under current law, the MVA is required to refuse to renew or suspend the registration of any motor vehicle incurring an electronic toll violation if the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) advises that a registered vehicle owner has failed to pay a toll and civil penalty for a toll violation or has not contested the toll violation within a specified time period.
- The MVA must also refuse to renew or suspend the registration if the MDTA or the District Court notifies the agency that a person who chose to contest a toll violation failed to appear in court for the violation or failed to pay the toll violation and associated penalties after being found guilty of the toll violation.
- AAA Mid-Atlantic is generally supportive of electronic tolling. For years, we have encouraged motorists to utilize E-ZPass whenever possible to minimize traffic congestion and motor vehicle-caused air pollution, increase safety, and speed traffic flow.
- However, in light of the on-going driver complaints and frustrations about exorbitant penalties for unpaid tolls, we believe that flagging or suspending the registration of those with unpaid toll violations and penalties is unfair at this time.
- According to multiple media reports and in conversations with AAA Mid-Atlantic members, in many cases, motorists with and without E-ZPass transponders were unaware they even had violations.
- Many were frustrated with trying to obtain information to resolve the matter, after waiting hours on the phone or trying unsuccessfully to speak to a customer service representative at all.
- I, personally experienced the same frustration for a minor violation that I wasn't even aware of since I do have an E-ZPass, but unknowingly had a video toll violation from 2020 that I learned of a year later.

- While AAA Mid-Atlantic is pleased that the MDTA has approved an eight-month waiver and payment options for toll customers to address what has clearly been a nightmare for many, our concern is that the issues may not be completely resolved within the “grace period,” which ends on November 30, 2022.
- We recognize the deferral of tolls during the pandemic may have been well-intended to provide relief for Maryland motorists during a challenging time; however, the unexpected bills and fees that have mounted for many has created a hardship within itself.
- On behalf of AAA Mid-Atlantic’s more than one million Maryland members, we urge the Committee to give **HB 29** a favorable report.

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