
January 18, 2022

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee
The Maryland House of Delegates
House Office Building, Room 241
Annapolis MD 21401

Re: Letter of Information – House Bill 163 – Public Information Act – Required Denials – Sociological Information and Distribution Lists

Dear Chair Pendergrass and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 163 but offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

The MDOT is committed to protecting the privacy of Maryland citizens and the personal data we possess in order to conduct business with the public. Releasing a personal address, regardless of a requestor's sworn use, would disclose private sociological information. Such a release could produce unwanted targeting for political, commercial, or business gain. An individual's personal address could be a mental hospital or rehab facility or result in the unwanted exposure of a person in a domestic abuse situation. MDOT is not legally permitted to release personally identifiable information (PII), including personal contact information such as home addresses.

Allowing distribution lists to leave a custodian's possession would once again raise concerns over personal information privacy and protection that could lead to cyber, financial, or other types of harm to those individuals whose information is released. The proposed legislation could also lead to the release of other personal information, such as email addresses. There is nothing that allows the public to opt out of their information being provided should these bills become law. Additionally, House Bill 163 neither defines a clear penalty to those who violate the sworn statement, nor does it provide recourse for those whose personal information is subject to a breach or other nefarious activity. The automatic denial provided by the current law removes any ambiguity and ensures that personal information is protected.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information as it deliberates House Bill 163.

Respectfully submitted,

Pilar Helm
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-841-1090