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February 9, 2023

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

***RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 252 – State Highway Administration – Highway Cleanup – Records and Reporting***

Dear Chair Barve and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 252 but offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

House Bill 252 requires the MDOT State Highway Administration (SHA) to maintain and report to the Maryland General Assembly annually on records related to the process, procedures, and expenditures associated with maintaining highways in the State of Maryland. These reports shall include a Statewide summary for county and multicounty agreements and a summary of each agreement. Additionally, House Bill 252 requires the SHA to publish highway cleanup schedules and current highway cleanup projects by county on its website.

The SHA has robust litter and highway cleanup processes in place through its 28 statewide maintenance shops and 7 engineering districts, spanning 23 counties. These local maintenance shops are tasked with maintaining roadside conditions at or above a defined level of service, throughout their geographic areas of responsibility and within their allocated operating budget. Throughout the State, \$8.3 million was expended on litter removal in Fiscal Year (FY) 2022. While operating budget allocations are based on roadside miles, lane miles, average annual vehicle miles traveled, and prior year's level of service, each district and maintenance shop must consider many factors when managing their operations and expenditures.

The SHA relies on partnerships with other agencies and entities to address highway litter concerns. Litter and mowing related agreements are in place with some local entities to concentrate efforts in areas with the greatest need. Additionally, the SHA manages the Sponsor-A-Highway (SAH) program, which authorizes sponsorships of 1-mile highway segments, where the sponsor pays a maintenance provider to remove litter along their segment(s) weekly. Alternatively, SHA sponsors the Adopt-A-Highway (AAH) Program, which is a volunteer-based program, located on lower-speed roadways, whereby the adopter is required to remove litter four times per year. If SAH maintenance providers or AAH volunteers are unable to maintain their segments, they can be removed from the program for not complying with the requirements. The SHA also partners with the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPPSCS). However, these services have significantly decreased since FY 20, largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To keep pace with litter demands, the SHA diverted more staff and equipment to in-

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house litter removal activities, without detracting from essential safety and mobility-related maintenance work.

The SHA is also heavily reliant on mowing and litter contractors to perform litter removal. Since the beginning of 2020, 14 of these contractors have defaulted placing additional workload on SHA's in-house resources. Equipment, fuel, and labor cost increases are the most frequently cited reasons for non-performance by these contractors. The SHA is continuously seeking to improve contracts, support small businesses, and mitigate contractor non-performance.

Lastly, the SHA maintains records related to the highway cleanup process, budget, and expenditures for each county. The documentation required by this House Bill 252 can be provided at any time, upon request.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating House Bill 252.

Respectfully submitted,

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