
February 1, 2023

The Honorable Melony Griffith
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: *Letter of Information – Senate Bill 140 – State Highway Administration – Fallen Heroes Fishing Creek Bridge – Designation*

Dear Chair Griffith and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on Senate Bill 140 but offers the following information for the Committee’s consideration.

Senate Bill 140 would require the MDOT State Highway Administration (SHA) to designate the bridge across Fishing Creek on MD 261 in Calvert County as the Fallen Heroes Fishing Creek Bridge.

The MDOT has an established policy and procedure for roadway dedication or naming. Upon receipt of a dedication, naming or renaming request, the Maryland Department of Transportation gathers the appropriate information to present to the Maryland Transportation Commission (MTC). Such requests should include statements of support from local elected officials and state legislators, as well as statements showing broad community support. Upon review, the MTC then submits the request to the Secretary of Transportation for a decision.

Senate Bill 140 does not clarify the exact meaning of “designate,” but the potential renaming of a State highway or any public road poses challenges and costs including: reprinting of maps, replacing signs along and beyond the immediate highway area, changing mailing addresses, difficulty in locating an emergency 911 services call based on an older road name, upgrading emergency and other government mapping systems, and confusion and potential costs with legal or real estate documents that reference a road name that no longer exists. For these reasons, the MDOT recommends the dedication process for a roadway or facility, as it visibly honors the requested individual, group, or entity with the appropriate signage and avoids the concerns enumerated above.

It should be noted that the Maryland Department of Transportation received a dedication request for Fishing Creek Bridge to be dedicated in honor of a local public servant who has since passed away. Both the MTC and the Secretary of Transportation approved the dedication request, and the MDOT SHA has been working to identify a safe and secure area to place the signage.

The Honorable Melony Griffith
Page Two

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating Senate Bill 140.

Respectfully submitted,

Pilar Helm
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090