

March 2, 2023

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

***RE: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 675 – Howard County and St. Mary's County -
Driver's Licenses - Driver Skills Examinations***

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on Senate Bill 675 but offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

Senate Bill 675 gives the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) the authority to conduct a pilot program in Howard and St. Mary's Counties, to authorize driver's education schools to conduct and administer driver skills examinations for license applicants. Licensed and authorized driver's schools must conduct the driver's skills examination using approved methods under a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the MVA or the MVA will terminate their authorization. It further requires driver's schools to only include those who have two years of experience as a Driver's License Agent (DLA).

Senate Bill 675 would require significant changes to the current methods by which the MVA conducts driver skills testing and issues licenses. Under Senate Bill 675, the MVA would be responsible for ensuring consistency among the driver's education schools, including that they obtain the proper resources for testing, how tests are conducted, staff training, and compliance with additional standards and regulations currently met by the MVA branch offices. Approximately 72,092 people complete driver's education annually at the 350 driving school branches in the State, and the MVA administers approximately 163,279 skills tests per year. The two counties selected for the pilot program could limit the number of driving schools that could qualify to meet the requirements of the MVA, with 41 total schools between primary and branch locations located in the two counties. Additionally, there are further implications regarding the process for once a test is passed, and when and if a driver's education school would charge a fee for a license.

Under Senate Bill 675, DLAs employed by the driving school must have a minimum of two years of experience in order to administer tests, which could impact qualification for the pilot program. The MVA currently has an established process for DLA training and certification; a lead employee trains new DLAs on how to conduct a non-commercial skills tests based on the standards established by the MVA. No independent tests can be administered by the DLA trainee until these standards are met.

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Page Two

Lastly, the MVA has a dedicated staff of inspectors that currently audit the driving schools for compliance in their current capacities. To implement Senate Bill 675, the MVA would need additional resources to meet the demands of increased audits.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating Senate Bill 675.

Respectfully submitted,

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