



Wes Moore  
Governor  
Aruna Miller  
Lieutenant Governor  
Paul J. Wiedefeld  
Secretary

April 2, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman  
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee  
251 House Office Building  
Annapolis MD 21401

**RE: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 902 – Wildlife Protections and Highway Crossings**

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) offers the following information on Senate Bill 902 for the Committee’s consideration.

As amended, Senate Bill 902 requires the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the State Highway Administration (SHA) to collaborate on various tasks related to wildlife-vehicle interactions, including highway crossings and collision avoidance. Of note, the amended bill requires SHA to develop design guidelines for bridges, culverts, and roads aimed at improving passage for endangered species, threatened species, and Species of Greatest Conservation Need on or before June 30, 2026. DNR would prioritize certain species for connecting habitats or preventing collisions between vehicles and wildlife. On completion of the design guidelines, SHA shall consider the guidelines and may consult with DNR on the design, rehabilitation, or replacement of bridges, culverts, or State highways that intersect the habitat of one of these species.

MDOT and SHA thank the sponsors of this bill and its cross file – House Bill 1129 – for working with the Department on revised language and for considering SHA’s comments on the implementation of specific design elements in SHA infrastructure. SHA believes the revised language aligns SHA’s practices with the sponsors’ intent and appreciates that the bill requires consideration of relevant safety standards, engineering best practices, and the reasonableness and feasibility of implementing design elements. Finally, SHA thanks the sponsors for changes to clarify the application of this bill – as amended, the bill will not apply to a project that has an existing National Environmental Policy Act Record of Decision and for which the design of the project is more than 30% complete before the effective date of the bill, helping to limit changes to projects that have already achieved significant design milestones.

SHA continues to prioritize practices that enhance endangered species projects and reduce wildlife related crashes. Presently, SHA is researching practices from other states and evaluating potential funding sources to support the State’s efforts, including federal grant opportunities. The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating Senate Bill 902.

Sincerely,

Matthew Mickler  
Director  
Office of Government Affairs  
Maryland State Highway Administration  
410-545-5629

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