

March 27, 2024

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

RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 1032 – Highways – Tourist Area Corridor Signage Program

Dear Chair Smith and Committee members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) offers the following information on House Bill 1032 for the Committee’s consideration.

As amended, House Bill 1032 seeks to codify a modified version of the Tourist Area and Corridor Signage (TAC) program operated by the State Highway Administration (SHA). As background, TAC is a system of supplemental guide signs that directs motorists to eligible local attractions that meet certain operational conditions, including hours and days of operation.

The SHA thanks the sponsor for collaborating on revisions to the bill as introduced. As amended, the bill establishes a participant-funded version of TAC where SHA 1) provides guidance for TAC installations and 2) retains the responsibility of ensuring signs are compliant with the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and other requirements for mounting signs on State right-of-way. The amendments help offset State costs associated with continuation and adaptation of the TAC program while ensuring SHA and the Department of Commerce have the resources and authority to manage the program so as to benefit the attractions, tourists, and all road users.

Currently, the MUTCD authorizes states to operate tourist-oriented directional sign programs for businesses that derive a major portion of the business’s income or visitors from road users not residing in the area of the facility. The MUTCD limits use of these signs to rural highways, or highways normally characterized by lower volumes, higher speeds, fewer turning conflicts, and less conflicts with pedestrians. Accordingly, SHA will investigate alternatives to adapt the State’s program to ensure adequate coverage of attractions in urban and urbanized areas of the State.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating House Bill 1032.

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