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February 11, 2025

TO: The Honorable C.T. Wilson, Chair
Economic Matters Committee

FROM: Steven M. Sakamoto-Wengel
Consumer Protection Counsel for Regulation, Legislation and Policy

RE: House Bill 843 – Consumer Protection – Motor Vehicles --Right to Repair
- SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

The Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General supports House Bill 843 sponsored by Delegates Hornberger, Baker, Feldmark, Ghrist, and McComas, which would guarantee the Right to Repair an automobile at the repair facility of the owner's choosing, or allow the owner to repair the vehicle themselves. However, HB 843 would require the Division to prepare an information sheet for automobile purchasers explaining telematics, which would require expertise the Division doesn't currently have, so we would ask that the requirement be removed from the bill or transferred to an appropriate resource having such knowledge.

This bill is based on Massachusetts' automotive right to repair law and would require a manufacturer of vehicles with telematics to provide the diagnostic information and tools to permit independent automobile repair facilities and owners to repair vehicles that rely upon these types of systems. The Consumer Protection Division has consistently been supportive of Right to Repair legislation, which helps provide consumers with more and less expensive repair options. The bill, though, would require the Consumer Protection Division to develop a document to be provided to consumers at the time of purchase that explains what telematics are and that provides a consumer's rights with regard to access to telematics diagnostic information and tools. According to the bill, telematics includes remote diagnostics information, automatic airbag deployment and crash notifications, stolen vehicle locations, navigation information, remote door unlock, and transmission of emergency and vehicle location information to public safety answering points. The bill further provides that telematics includes any other service integrating vehicle location

technology and wireless communications. While the Consumer Protection Division mediates complaints with respect to automobile repairs, the Division has no specialized knowledge with respect to telematics. Accordingly, as written, the Division would need to hire a staff member with knowledge of telematics in order to prepare the required information sheet. These staffing needs may be greater depending on the number of complaints received about these practices.

Modern automobiles are basically computers on wheels and repairs are more complex and expensive. However, by requiring automobile manufacturers to make available to independent repair shops and automobile owners the same diagnostic tools they provide to their dealers, House Bill 843 would provide consumers with cheaper, more varied repair options.

For these reasons, we ask that the Economic Matters Committee return a favorable report on House Bill 843 with an amendment removing the provisions requiring the Division to prepare the information sheet for consumers.

cc: The Honorable Kevin Hornberger
The Honorable Terry L. Baker
The Honorable Jessica Feldmark
The Honorable Jefferson Ghrist
The Honorable Susan McComas