

April 1, 2025

The Honorable Marc Korman  
Chair, House Environment & Transportation Committee  
250 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

***RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 1520 – Baltimore County and Baltimore City - Vehicle Laws - Lighting on Privately Owned Vehicles***

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 1520 and offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

HB 1520 would allow up to five individuals who are the highest-ranking officers for certain nonprofit volunteer emergency medical services organizations located in Baltimore County and Baltimore City to equip their privately owned vehicles with red or red and white lights or signal devices for use in driving to or while at the scene of an emergency. The Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) would be required to process authorization requests for approval of each vehicle granted authorization.

The MVA has met with a local volunteer rescue squad on this issue previously and has advised that it cannot authorize emergency light use for personal officers of the organization without changing current law. MDOT respects the value of community-based emergency medical services and their network of volunteers but seeks clarification regarding the authorization created by HB 1520. While the bill authorizes "no more than five of the highest-ranking officers" in each nonprofit volunteer emergency medical organization located in Baltimore County or Baltimore City to utilize the lights in question on their personal vehicles, MVA's understanding is that some of these organizations are comprised of multiple sub-organizations, each with their own officers. If each sub-organization is authorized to request lighting for five of its highest-ranking officers, there is the potential for a cumulative total of more than five permitted personal vehicles per organization.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the Committee consider this information when deliberating House Bill 1520.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine E. Nizer  
Administrator  
Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration  
410-787-7830

Matthew Mickler  
Director of Government Affairs  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
410-865-1090