

February 27, 2025

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

RE: Letter of Support – HB 1375 – Vehicle Equipment – Portable Variable Messaging Signs - Authorization

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports House Bill 1375 as a tool to enhance the safety of motorists, first responders, and tow truck drivers on our roadways.

HB 1375 authorizes tow trucks to display a portable changeable messaging sign (PCMS) while assisting with a crash or disabled vehicle on a highway. The signs would be securely mounted on tow trucks and conform to standards established by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). The signs would only display messages pre-approved by the State Highway Administration (SHA).

The safety of everyone who uses Maryland’s highway system is the highest priority for the SHA. Whether people are walking, biking, driving, or on the side of the road, the SHA is dedicated to saving lives and preventing injuries by reducing motor vehicle crashes. HB 1375 supports SHA’s Vision Zero efforts and will play an important part in keeping Maryland’s roadway responders and those they assist safe. All messaging displayed on Maryland State Highways must be in compliance with MUTCD standards.

The SHA would like to recommend that the word “accident” be replaced with the word “crash” in the bill language. Using the word accident suggests an incident was avoidable, when most roadway crashes are preventable and attributed to human error.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information during their deliberations and issue House Bill 1375 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

April King
Acting Director
Office of Government Affairs
Maryland State Highway Administration
410-210-5780

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