
February 6, 2025

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

RE: Letter of Support – House Bill 225 – Vehicle Laws – Exceptional Hauling Permits for Farm Products

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports House Bill 225 and offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

House Bill 225 will reduce the administrative burden for permit applicants and the State Highway Administration (SHA) as it relates to obtaining and issuing exceptional hauling permits for field-loaded agricultural products, defined in Transportation Article §24-113.2. Additionally, SB 203 increases the maximum gross weight of a vehicle operating under an exceptional hauling permit with at least five axles from 87,000 pounds to 88,000 pounds.

Under current law, the administrative requirements associated with the issuance of hauling permits for field-loaded agriculture products are excessively burdensome and difficult for the SHA to track and enforce. House Bill 225 would create a simplified permitting application and issuance process which reflects continuity with existing permits that have been vetted over extended periods of time for safety and renewal.

The SHA believes that the amendments proposed to Transportation Article §24-113.2 in House Bill 225 would promote compliance with permitting requirements for farm-loaded agricultural products, which improves the accuracy of hauling data and allows SHA to better document route and regional infrastructure usage. This data is critical for SHA's asset management and system preservation program.

The Exceptional Hauling Permit would be inclusive of all field loaded farm products as defined in Agricultural Article §10-601(c). Farm products as defined in current statute include any agricultural, horticultural, vegetable, or fruit product of the soil, including livestock, meats, marine food products, poultry, eggs, dairy products, wool, hides, feathers, nuts, honey, and every product of farm, forest, orchard, garden or water.

House Bill 225 does not alter existing hauling permit fees. SHA anticipates a moderate increase in issued hauling permits; however, it does not expect a significant financial impact. Therefore, there are no anticipated impacts to revenues to the Transportation Trust Fund from the bill changes.

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The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee grant House Bill 225 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

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