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February 24, 2025

The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary  
Chair, Ways and Means Committee  
131 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

***RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 1113 – Election Law - Enhanced Automatic Voter Registration System***

Dear Chair Atterbeary and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 1113 and offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

HB 1113 would alter current motor voter law to implement an opt-out voter registration system that utilizes certain documents submitted to the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA).

The MVA currently offers voter registration in compliance with federal motor voter requirements and works with the SBE to ensure its process meets legal requirements. Any transaction with the MVA – whether in person or online via myMVA eServices – that alters a Maryland Driver's License or Identification Card via a first-time application, renewal, change of address, duplicate/replacement, or alteration requires an applicant to verify certain information that is then transmitted to the SBE. At present, applicants must self-certify they meet eligibility requirements established by the SBE and indicate certain information such as political party affiliation and residential address remains the same or requires alterations.

Under the provisions of HB 1113, the MVA would alter the existing process in several ways. For new applicants, the MVA would be required to make a determination of citizenship based on the documentation presented. The MVA would store this citizenship information in its database so that voter questions would not be asked the next time this customer completes an MVA transaction. At present, the MVA only determines lawful presence in the United States to issue a REAL ID license or ID. Lawful presence is distinct from U.S. Citizenship.

For existing applicants, currently, the MVA searches the voter database and presents to the customer their current voter registration selections for address and party affiliation and asks the customer if they would like to make changes. Under the proposal, the MVA would search the voter database and if it found the customer registered, would not present voter registration selections to the customer for confirmation (except for party affiliation). Voters who are not found in the voter database – but who have a REAL ID – would continue to be presented with the same questions that they are asked today.

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For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the Committee consider this information when deliberating House Bill 1113.

Respectfully submitted,

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