
March 4, 2026

The Honorable Kriselda Valderrama
Chair, House Economic Matters Committee
230 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

***RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 1166 – Motor Vehicles - Dealers – Front
Registration Plate Display***

Dear Chair Valderrama and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 1166 and offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

HB 1166 prohibits automobile dealers from delivering a motor vehicle to a buyer or lessee unless it is equipped with registration plate mounting hardware for display of a plate on the front of a vehicle or the buyer or lessee signs a written statement acknowledging they understand it is legally required and refuse its installation. Dealers must report the name of each buyer signing such a statement once per month to the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA).

The MVA has been in regular communication with Maryland automobile dealers about the requirement for a vehicle to display a front license plate when delivered to a Maryland owner or lessee. Most recently, the MVA reminded dealers in the fall of 2025 that they must deliver a vehicle with a front license plate displayed on it or potentially be liable for failure to do so under Transportation Article § 26-101.

Under HB 1166, the MVA would now be notified of instances where customers refuse a front plate bracket and the display of the legally required plate. However, it provides no authority or authorization for the MVA to act on such information. A more immediate notice with clear authority to denote this refusal on the vehicle record in a manner visible to law enforcement would provide a clearer enforcement tool to assist in compelling proper display of a front plate. The MVA has engaged in conversations with the bill sponsor about these potential changes.

It should be noted that there are numerous benefits to having both a front and rear registration plate. Vehicles with no front registration plate result in a significant loss of toll revenue for the Maryland Transportation Authority. There are also numerous public safety and law enforcement benefits to a vehicle having both a front and rear vehicle registration plate. The lack of a secondary front plate would impede law enforcement's efforts to apprehend criminals as well as missing or endangered individuals. Additionally, two plates help increase the likelihood that a vehicle involved in an AMBER or SILVER alert is identified, where time is of the essence.

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The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the committee consider this information during its deliberation of House Bill 1166.

Respectfully submitted,

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