
February 17, 2026

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

RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 179 – Department of Commerce – Complaint Portal and Annual Report

Dear Chair Valderrama and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 179 and offers the following information for the Committee’s consideration.

HB 179 requires the Department of Commerce to create and maintain a complaint portal for reporting when a government unit takes longer than 60 days to process an application for a license, form, certificate, certification, permit, or registration for a business or nonprofit organization, and requires the Department to submit an annual report to the General Assembly regarding complaints filed through the portal.

The State Highway Administration (SHA) issues numerous permits for work on state highways including access permits, utility permits, hauling permits, residential driveway permits, district permits, and special events permits. These permits are intended to ensure the safety of communities and highway users when state roadways are being used for purposes that SHA may not be directly responsible for. The permits vary in complexity due to the nature of the permit request. In some cases, SHA is unable to process permit requests within certain timeframes due to circumstances outside of SHA’s control. For example, sometimes applicants submit applications with missing information and resubmission is required.

Additionally, certain permits inherently require overall durations longer than 60 days for the final permit issuance. The permit is submitted in phases, starting with the traffic impact study, followed by the plan review stage, and culminating in the final permit. The plan review stage for large developments (e.g., commercial projects greater than 300,000 SF) can be 60 days alone and typically is addressed collaboratively with developers in milestone submissions. SHA has worked closely with local, regional, and state partners to advance improvements to the Access Management permitting process, including publishing clear process workflows and timeframes that increase predictability and transparency.¹

It should be noted that the SHA has established timeframes and tracking systems for permits that we issue. In 2024, Senate Bill 472 – the Transparent Government Act – became law, and SHA is fully compliant with this law publicly publishing the processes and timeframes for all permits.

For all permits, SHA stays engaged with applicants throughout the permitting process. The SHA is committed to Governor Moore's customer service pledge of providing friendly, timely, accurate, accessible, and transparent customer service to all customers. The SHA has a robust Customer Service portal where customers can submit feedback which is routed to the appropriate SHA office. For many of our permits, the SHA has also established a published Issue Resolution Matrix that allows the submitting entity to escalate any challenges they are experiencing with the permitting process to the appropriate SHA personnel.

In 2025, SHA took several actions to enhance the customer experience. In addition to the improvements made to the access management and other permitting process for our business customers, the SHA has made investments in improving customer service for our highway users. SHA implemented a Customer Service Agreement, as well as Best Practices and Standards for all SHA employees that equip our team with the necessary resources to provide and remain committed to excellent customer service in all business areas.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information during their deliberations of House Bill 179.

Respectfully submitted,

April Moeller
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

ⁱ <https://roads.maryland.gov/ohd2/SHAAccessManagementProcess.pdf>