

March 31, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment
230 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

***RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 691 – State Government – Procedures – Permitting
Efficiency for Housing Development Projects***

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation takes no position on House Bill 691 and offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

HB 691 requires each unit in the Executive Branch of state government that issues permits related to housing construction to adopt streamlining procedures for the project permitting process.

The State Highway Administration (SHA) is responsible under Maryland law and the Maryland Code of Regulations to protect public safety and roadway infrastructure investments by requiring access permits for entrances to roadways, requiring improvements, and imposing conditions to mitigate adverse impacts to roadway safety and function. This includes access management and permitting for residential developments along state highways.

In September 2025, Governor Moore signed Executive Order (EO) 01.01.2025.19 (*Addressing Maryland's Affordable Housing Crisis*) to address Maryland's 96,000-unit housing shortage. The order directed state agencies to accelerate residential development by streamlining permitting processes.

The SHA is in compliance with Governor Moore's EO and established a working group to coordinate closely with housing development industry representatives and local and state partners to advance improvements to access management and the permitting process. As part of the work group, SHA developed and is currently piloting an optional third party expedited review process to streamline the review and approval of access permits for residential developments by providing dedicated resources. The streamlined process would enable developers to pay for the expedited review of their permit applications, traffic impact study, plan review, and issuance of the approved permit. These new SHA processes mimic third party expedited reviewer processes used in other Maryland counties for building permits. The process is currently being piloted in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties and is anticipated to be available for all residential developments in Spring 2026.

The SHA has also updated its Access Management and Access Permit website to clarify review timelines, provide links to process flow charts, and provide single points of contact for each district. Our dashboard tools monitor timelines for each review stage. SHA is also updating Hydrologic and Hydraulic (H&H) guidelines (published in August 2025), our Traffic Impact Study Guidelines, and

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incorporating Complete Streets policy practices into the Access Manual to standardize requirements and provide greater predictability to designers/developers.

The SHA remains committed to eliminating redundancies and supports Governor Moore's vision for a more competitive and affordable Maryland through active administrative reforms. Most of the bill's requirements are already being implemented under the Governor's Executive Order. House Bill 691 does not address the resource and system issues identified by the work group. Absent the process enhancements where a developer can opt in to pay for the additional resources, SHA does not anticipate that substantial additional streamlining is feasible beyond the areas already addressed by the work group.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the Committee consider this information during its deliberations of House Bill 691.

Respectfully submitted,

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