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March 5, 2026

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

***RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 1408 – Motor Vehicles - Automated Traffic Enforcement Systems - Impoundment***

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 1408 but offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

HB 1408 would permit law enforcement to tow and impound a motor vehicle if the vehicle record shows at least three unpaid citations from an automated traffic enforcement (ATE) system and the citations are at least 30 days past due. Enforcement action is also limited to either a secondary offense or if the vehicle is parked.

ATE citations reinforce safe driving behaviors and are a proven tool to improve driver behavior and safety. Increasing the consequences imposed on unsafe driving behaviors could further increase the effectiveness of these tools and demonstrate that Maryland is Serious about Safety. How to most effectively implement the means to do so under HB 1408 may benefit from additional context on existing procedures.

The Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) currently flags a vehicle account for an unpaid ATE citation or parking ticket, among other past due obligations, at the request of the issuing jurisdiction. The MVA will charge an administrative flag fee to a customer and prevent the renewal of the vehicle's registration until it is resolved. However, the MVA receives minimum information about ATE and does not have a mechanism to share this information with other jurisdictions or entities beyond the vehicle owner that the vehicle has a flag on its account.

Additionally, the due date on a citation can vary greatly between jurisdictions and the timeline to request that MVA flag a vehicle can also vary further. Some jurisdictions may request MVA flag the vehicle account immediately after a payment is past due, only providing 30 days from the date the citation was created. Others may give 60 days to make payment, another 30 or more days before a late fee is assessed, and only after 90 days or more will they then request that MVA flag the vehicle.

Without clearer authority to receive more detailed ATE citation data in a comprehensive state-wide manner across the over 120 jurisdictions, it is not clear that the MVA would have a means to indicate on a vehicle record it would qualify for impoundment under the qualifying terms set

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in HB 1408 or experience significant delays in ensuring vehicles that meet the eligibility requirements in the bill are indicated as such to enforcement authorities.

Further, the State Highway Administration (SHA) has concerns that the bill's proposed timeline of 30 days may be difficult to comply with, leaving limited time – particularly for owners with a large number of outstanding citations – to receive and respond before impoundment action can be taken. To address this concern, the SHA recommends the Committee amend the bill to provide that impoundment cannot occur until the vehicle's registration is flagged. While this can vary by jurisdiction, that would generally occur closer to 60 days or more following an initial citation being issued.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the committee consider this information during its deliberation of House Bill 1408.

Respectfully submitted,

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