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Howard County

Government, Labor, and
Elections Committee

Subcommittees

Election Law

Labor

Oversight Committee on Personnel



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 5, 2026

To: The Honorable Marc A. Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Delegate Jen Terrasa
District 13, Howard County

Re: Sponsor Testimony in Support of HB 1283, Maryland Transportation Authority -
Video Tolls - Collection

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present HB 1283 which addresses the issue of exorbitant fees associated with unpaid tolls.

Drivers in Maryland who fail to pay a video toll within 30 days will receive a citation from the Maryland Transportation Authority which includes a \$25 Civil penalty for **each** unpaid toll. So, a person who commutes five times a week could easily be fined \$250 for tolls that might only have been \$30 originally. (5 days x 2 trips x \$25) These penalties can quickly stack up and become an economic hardship.

MDTA gives drivers 30 more days to either pay the toll and civil penalty or contest the transaction by requesting a court hearing. If the civil penalty and toll have not been paid, and the customer did not contest the transaction by the 30th day, a warning letter is sent to inform the customer of a referral to MVA for either tag suspension, or non-renewal of plates (based on the amount owed).

The customer is given another 15 days to pay the civil penalty and toll. If not paid, they are queued to be referred to MVA. After 15 days, if payment is not received the customer is sent a letter from MVA stating non-renewal or suspension of vehicle registration. Then after another 15 days a final toll violation notice is issued.

If the final toll violation notice goes unpaid, customers are referred to the Central Collection Unit. Where that adds even more to the total amount owed: CCU gets an additional 17%.

Once the amount goes to CCU, the MDTA is not able to adjust the amount owed, including the late fees. They can only work with the customer on a payment plan, and cannot work with the customer to waive the enormous collection of late fees they have incurred. Obviously there are a number of issues that need to be addressed, but this particular problem is the aim of HB 1283: giving MDTA the ability to work with its customers on a more reasonable plan, especially when they are eager to pay off their debt and move on.

The reason for failure to pay the original toll can vary, according to the different constituents who have reached out to my office. Sometimes, it's because their E-Z Pass responder stopped working unbeknownst to them. Other times it's because they never received the notice of a toll due or the subsequent citation. Sometimes it's because by the time they hear about it, the amount has ballooned into something that they cannot handle.

Here's an example from a constituent who reached out to our offices in December of 2026:

*A few days ago, I received a small toll notice for \$1.46. When I called the Maryland Toll Customer Service Center to pay it, I was informed—unexpectedly—that there was also a **\$1,400** bill that had already been sent to collections. This was a complete surprise to me, as I had never received any notices about these charges.*

After contacting the collection agency, they explained that the balance was connected to a toll violation from 2020, which had accumulated additional fees over time. During that period, I had moved from Elkridge, and although I updated my address with the post office, I forgot to update my address with the MVA, which I later corrected in 2023. Even after updating my MVA information, I still never received any mail or warnings about this large outstanding balance at my new address or email.

In the past, I became aware of smaller outstanding amounts only because there was a flag on my license, which I paid immediately to prevent suspension. I asked the toll representatives if I could set up an installment plan, but even with a payment arrangement, the \$1,400 amount is simply too high for me to manage. I am willing and able to pay the original toll fees, but the accumulated collection and penalty charges are far beyond my financial capacity. This situation is extremely stressful.

I also heard from a constituent who was trying to work out a payment plan with MDTA for what he thought was a \$20,000 balance, but was told he owed \$40,000!

Aligned with our current focus on affordability, this bill allows the MDTA to work with people trying to do the right thing, pay what their tolls, and keep their vehicles registered while they are doing their best to address the problem.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB 1283.