

March 5, 2026

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

RE: Letter of Opposition – House Bill 1495 – Vehicle Laws – Registration Plates

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) respectfully opposes House Bill 1495 and offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

HB 1495 requires the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) to issue a single vehicle registration plate to all classes of vehicles. It further adds prohibitions on persons who are issued a Class L (historic) registration plate from violating the terms of issuance with the threat of a warning on the first offense.

Removing the requirement of displaying the front license plate would severely hamper the Maryland Transportation Authority's (MDTA) ability to identify the vehicle's registered owner, especially when the rear license plate is inadvertently or deliberately obstructed (e.g., bike racks). During calendar year 2024, there were approximately 15 million transactions involving 2-axle vehicles titled in Maryland. For these transactions, the rear (default) license plate was used to identify and invoice the registered owner approximately 57% of the time while the front license plate was used to identify and invoice the registered owner approximately 43% of the time. If the front license plate was not present, the MDTA would have lost the ability to invoice for 6.6 million transactions, which equates to approximately \$35 million in lost toll revenue associated with 2-axle vehicles.

There are also numerous public safety benefits of having both a front and rear vehicle registration plate. Having both a front and rear vehicle registration plate increases the success rates of plate identification by law enforcement officers and electronic readers such as License Plate Readers (LPR). In a similar situation to tolling, plate covers, bicycle carriers, luggage carriers, trailers, and other items that can obstruct rear plates can prevent a law enforcement officer or an LPR from reading the rear 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 law enforcement and the public locate vehicles involved in AMBER and SILVER alerts, where time is of the essence.

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While removing the front vehicle registration plate requirement would save the MVA approximately \$2.5 million annually, the combined toll revenue impacts and public safety concerns offset the reduction in expenditures. The Maryland Department of Transportation and the Maryland Transportation Authority respectfully request that the Committee consider this information and issue House Bill 1495 an unfavorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

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