

March 10, 2025

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

***RE: Letter of Support with Amendments – Senate Bill 751 – Vehicle Laws – Required Security
– Exemption of Farm Area Motor Vehicles***

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports Senate Bill 751 with amendments.

SB 751 exempts registered Class K vehicles (farm area vehicles) from standard vehicle insurance requirements. Class K vehicles can be any type of motor vehicle (not solely farm equipment such as tractors) otherwise capable of being registered as a truck, tractor trailer, or passenger car. Class K vehicles can travel and haul cargo on any State or local roadway that is within a 25-mile radius of the farm it is registered to. If a farmer leases or owns multiple farms 25 miles or less apart, they could conceivably travel up to 50 or more miles from point to point using Maryland roadways.

If passed, SB 751 would create a conflict with federal and state regulations in two scenarios – either if a farm area vehicle is engaged in “for hire operations” or if the vehicle is hauling hazardous materials under the requirements of TR §25-111.1 or 49 C.F.R., Part 387. While SHA does not anticipate these activities to be predominant scenarios, they would be noncompliant with federal safety mandates and would jeopardize SHA’s federal funding under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration’s Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program (MCSAP). The SHA’s annual federal funding through MCSAP exceeds \$8 million annually. If this issue is not addressed, the SHA will be at risk of losing federal funds.

In addition to the potential fiscal impacts, farm area vehicles operating on roadways with other road users are no less likely than other motor vehicles to be involved in crashes. By removing the insurance requirements entirely from Class K vehicles, this creates an inherent risk to State highway facilities and those traveling along the highway system. Finally, Class K vehicles are currently eligible for SHA’s Agriculture Hauling Permit which allows for the overweight hauling of certain agriculture products. The SHA would have to revisit eligibility requirements for these Class K vehicles if they become exempt from insurance requirements.

MDOT is appreciative of the opportunity to work with the sponsor and committee staff on amendments that will enable farm vehicles to operate under less restrictive insurance requirements while ensuring protection of Marylanders on public highways, thereby supporting

The Honorable William C. Smith Jr.
Page Two

the agricultural community. The Maryland Department of Transportation requests that the Committee consider this information during its deliberations and grant Senate Bill 751 a favorable vote with the suggested amendments.

Respectfully submitted,

April Moeller
Director of Government Affairs
State Highway Administration
410-210-5780

Matthew Mickler
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090