

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2016 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

Senate Bill 405

(Senator Guzzone)

Judicial Proceedings

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**State Highway Administration - Service Signs - Business or Attraction Located in Shopping Center**

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This bill requires the State Highway Administration (SHA), when taking a measurement to determine whether a business or an attraction that is located in a shopping center may be advertised on a service sign, to measure the distance from the “gore” of the associated exit ramp to the entrance of the shopping center. “Gore” means the point where an exit ramp leaves a State-controlled access highway.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** The bill’s requirements can be handled using existing budgeted resources.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** Potential meaningful. Some small businesses may benefit to the extent that the bill enables them to advertise on service signs.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law/Background:** In order to inform drivers about the availability of nearby gas, food, lodging, camping, or attractions, SHA is authorized to place service signs along State-controlled access highways; however any such signs must meet federal standards. SHA regulations must govern the type, lighting, size, number, and location of service signs. Before drafting regulations relating to service signs, SHA must consult with the Maryland Travel Council. In addition, SHA must consult with the Department of Commerce and the appropriate local government officials concerning the placement of service signs.

A business or attraction identified in a service sign must pay the full administrative and operational cost of procuring, installing, and maintaining the sign. Unless it is placed or authorized by SHA, a sign may not be placed or maintained within a State highway right-of-way.

SHA advises that its current practice is to measure from the gore of a highway exit ramp to the *door of a business* in order to determine which businesses may be advertised on a service sign; businesses that are closer to the gore have a higher priority for advertising on a service sign. Under the bill, SHA's measurement must be taken from the gore of a highway exit ramp to the *entrance of a shopping center*; thus, under the bill, businesses that are located within the same shopping center have equal priority to advertise on a service sign.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

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