



Larry Hogan
Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford
Lt. Governor
Gregory Slater
Acting Secretary

February 12, 2020

The Honorable Delores Kelley
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

Re: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 252 – Chesapeake Bay Bridge Crossing – Affected Counties- Infrastructure Funding

Dear Chair Kelley and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) offers the following letter of information on Senate Bill 252 for the Committee’s consideration.

This bill requires the Governor to include in the State budget, for any fiscal year that an appropriation is included in the State budget for the planning, engineering, right-of-way acquisition, and construction of a third bridge across the Chesapeake Bay, a capital grant for each county in which the bridge originates or terminates. The grant for each county must equal 25 percent of the amount appropriated for the fiscal year for the planning, engineering, right-of-way acquisition, and construction of the bridge. Any such grant may only be used by a county for transportation infrastructure improvements necessitated by or related to the construction of the bridge.

The Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) is currently leading the \$5 million Chesapeake Bay Crossing Study: Tier 1 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Bay Crossing Study), which includes a comprehensive study of project needs, a range of alternatives, benefits and impacts, and public outreach and coordination. In September and October of last year, the MDTA held seven Open Houses where interested parties were provided an update on the project and were given the opportunity to submit public comments. Materials and information from the Open Houses can be found at www.baycrossingstudy.com. Additionally, the MDTA posts all public comments received and has continued to accept comment submissions at the aforementioned website. The MDTA anticipates publishing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and holding additional public hearings in fall 2020. Public comments The Final Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement and the Record of Decision are expected to be completed by summer 2021.

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If MDOT was required to provide the capital grants outlined in Senate Bill 252, funding from other projects would have to be redirected. The development of MDOT's capital program involves many stakeholders and public meetings to prioritize needs across the State. The process includes: the submission of priority letters from all counties; the annual CTP tour to allow State officials to hear from local jurisdictions, elected officials, and the public in every county (a practice that has been in place for over 100 years); and a prioritization of needs. Projects are prioritized based on the State's goals, the availability of funding, and the scoring system established by Chapter 30 of 2017. Further, as the Bay Crossing Study progresses and the grants required by Senate Bill 252 are based on MDTA spending, the fiscal impact would likely total hundreds of millions of dollars annually, as engineering and construction costs for the project are likely to total billions of dollars.

The MDTA looks forward to continued collaboration as the current study progresses, and will continue to work alongside the public and County Participating Agencies.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the Committee consider this information as it deliberates Senate Bill 252.

Respectfully submitted,

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