



# Maryland Motor Truck Association

9256 Bendix Road, Suite 203, Columbia, MD 21045

Phone: 410-644-4600 Fax: 410-644-2537



**HEARING DATE:** March 11, 2020

**BILL NO/TITLE:** Senate Bill 557: Maryland Transportation Authority - Vehicle Not Using Bridge - No Toll Payment Required

**COMMITTEE:** Senate Finance Committee

**POSITION:** Support

Purpose: Senate Bill 557 would prevent the Maryland Transportation Authority from charging a toll to a vehicle that passes through a toll bridge plaza, but does not actually cross the bridge.

Maryland Motor Truck Association understands that truck movements sometimes contribute to traffic conflicts and road maintenance concerns - particularly where residential and industrial properties are in close proximity. When possible, we support buffer areas between industrial zones and residential communities. Many of the industries we serve operate 24 hours a day; yet, also fashion numerous local jobs and generate millions of dollars in economic activity.

One area where no such buffer exists is in Dundalk. For decades there have been residential concerns about truck traffic and discussions about how to divert traffic to alternate routes. Over the years, many of the routes that were previously used by trucks were sacrificed by the industry to maintain a positive relationship with the communities surrounding them. The trucking industry does not support any effort to further limit truck access in the region, or to force industry on to alternate routes because those routes often involve additional mileage or the paying of a toll. Senate Bill 557 attempts to overcome one of those challenges by addressing a concern at the I-695 toll plaza whereby trucks from Broening Highway that want to access the outer loop of I-695 are forced to pay the toll even though they do not ever cross the Key Bridge.

With the implementation of cashless tolling at the Key Bridge that started last October, there is a great chance to relocate the gantry and remove the toll for the Broening Highway access road.

The Maryland Transportation Authority previously attempted to address this issue by decreasing the toll rate for vehicles with 3 or more axles that are completing this movement. However, MMTA believes this option is not attractive to the majority of trucks leaving the Port. The primary reason for this is that most of the drivers operating at the Port of Baltimore are independent owner operators. Those drivers have the lowest margins and typically face the greatest financial challenges. They are highly unlikely to pay any toll for the ability to access this route.

The passage of Senate Bill 557 would open up a safer, more efficient and more environmentally friendly route to the trucking industry, thereby providing drivers with a viable and practical alternative to the local routes in the area. For that reason we ask for a favorable report.

**About Maryland Motor Truck Association:** Maryland Motor Truck Association is a not-for-profit trade association representing the trucking industry since 1935. In service to its 1,000+ members, MMTA is committed to supporting and advocating for a safe, efficient and profitable trucking industry across all sectors and industry types, regardless of size, domicile or type of operation.

**For further information, contact:** Louis Campion, (c) 443-623-4223