



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 335

Maryland Transportation Authority - E-ZPass - Disputes of Charges and Fees

House Environment and Transportation Committee

March 3, 2022

Submitted by Julia Gross and Kali Schumitz, Co-Chairs

Member Agencies:

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Maryland Hunger Solutions

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Welfare Advocates

Marylanders Against Poverty

Julia Gross, Co-Chair

P: 410-528-0021 ext 6029

E: jgross@mdhungersolutions.org

Kali Schumitz, Co-Chair

P: 410-412- 9105 ext 701

E: kschumitz@mdeconomy.org

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) strongly supports HB 335, which ensures that people using E-ZPass have a reasonable amount of time to review fees and charges to their account and address any errors.

The switch to cashless tolling for most toll roads in Maryland has created particular challenges for Marylanders experiencing poverty who may not have a bank account linked to their account to auto replenish or may not have enough funds to sustain a balance on their E-ZPass account.

While addressing issues with an E-ZPass account can be a hassle for all Marylanders, for people living paycheck to paycheck, it can have much more serious consequences. If a driver's EZ Pass transponder stops working and they are unaware, they can begin accruing video toll fees. Or, they may not receive proper notification from MVA of the video toll fees that they owe. These mistakes can lead to low-income drivers being trapped into a system of debt as they face high fees and interest attached to toll violations. It also puts them at greater risk of losing access to their reliable source of transportation, as MVA has the authority to suspend vehicle registrations for toll violations.

HB 335 provides a reasonable first step by ensuring customers have adequate time to dispute charges and fees. This will ensure people with limited incomes aren't forced to lose funds that were billed in error, and reduces the risk of someone's transponder being cut off due to account issues.

MAP appreciates your consideration and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for HB 335.

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) is a coalition of service providers, faith communities, and advocacy organizations advancing statewide public policies and programs necessary to alleviate the burdens faced by Marylanders living in or near poverty, and to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty.