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February 23, 2023

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve  
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee  
Room 251, House Office Building  
Annapolis MD 21401

***RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 659 – Chesapeake Bay Bridge – Prohibition on Trailers in Contraflow Lanes – Study***

Dear Chair Barve and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) take no position on House Bill 659 but offer the following information for the Committee's consideration.

House Bill 659 requires a study on the implications and feasibility of prohibiting vehicles with a semitrailer, pole trailer, or trailer from using a contraflow lane on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge.

The MDTA would like to note for the Committee that it has engaged in conversations with the bill sponsor about areas of concern in the bill, as drafted, as well as common goals. The MDTA looks forward to continuing its working relationship with the sponsor in the hope of reaching a consensus on the scope and timeline for the Study.

The left two lanes on Eastbound US 50 approaching the Bay Bridge are currently restricted for vehicles over five tons, meaning that the contraflow lane is already restricted for tractor trailers and most vehicles with a trailer. There is signage along US 50 to alert drivers of this restriction. Additionally, there are overhead Dynamic Message Signs (DMSs) directing commercial motor vehicles to specific lanes while utilizing the Bay Bridge during contraflow (except in other circumstances, such as when an AMBER Alert is issued).

When these vehicles do not comply, they are in violation of current law, resulting in a \$90.00 fine and a point on their license; should their violation result in a crash, they are subject to a \$130.00 fine and receive three points. MDTA police officers enforce the violations to the extent they are observed. Between January 1, 2022 and December 2, 2022, MDTA police conducted 107 traffic stops, issued 43 citations and 64 written warnings for those using incorrect lanes during contraflow.

The MDTA Police remain committed to enforcement and are coordinating outreach efforts with the Maryland Motor Truck Association (MMTA) to bring awareness to the issue.

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The Maryland Department of Transportation and the Maryland Transportation Authority respectfully request the Committee consider this information when deliberating House Bill 659.

Respectfully submitted,

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