

February 28, 2023

The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk
Chair, House Health Government and Operations Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 596 – Health and Human Services - Transportation Improvement Act of 2023

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 596 but offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

House Bill 596 establishes the Rural Nonemergency Medical Transportation Program for hospitals to coordinate with nonprofit organizations that provide transportation to or from medical services and mandates an annual appropriation for the Program of at least \$1,000,000 beginning in FY 2025. Additionally, House Bill 596 establishes the State Coordinating Committee for Health and Human Services Transportation (the Committee) and eliminates the caps on the Maryland Senior Ride Program and Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program.

The Committee proposed in House Bill 596 is tasked with reviewing the transportation needs of certain individuals, including those who are elderly, have a disability, and require access to jobs, medical, and other health-related appointments; MDOT is to staff the Committee. It should be noted for the Committee that MDOT does not have subject matter experts in health policy, and it would be necessary to collaborate with the Maryland Department of Health. Further, MDOT expects additional consultants would be needed to provide the level of analysis required.

Currently, the Maryland Senior Rides Program and the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program are capped at \$500,000 and \$400,000, respectively. The Senior Rides Program has previously been funded at just under \$190,000 per year and the JARC Program had been funded at \$400,000 per year. If these programs are both renewed at the existing funding levels, this would require about \$590,000 per year in additional funding. Any level of funding for these two programs in excess of the previous funding amounts will increase the fiscal impact of this bill.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating House Bill 596.

Respectfully submitted,

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