

J.B. JENNINGS
Legislative District 7
Baltimore and Harford Counties

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Capital Budget

Health and Human Services

Legislative Policy Committee



The Senate of Maryland
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August 20, 2025

Sent via Electronic Mail

The Honorable Samantha J. Biddle
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, MD 21076

Re: Welcome and Continued Engagement Regarding Exorbitant E-ZPass Fees

Dear Madame Secretary,

I would like to extend my sincere congratulations on your appointment as Acting Secretary of the Maryland Department of Transportation. Your appointment is a testament to your dedication, experience, and leadership throughout your distinguished career in public service.

Over the years, your work across regional planning, strategy, and policy has not only strengthened the operational backbone of Maryland's transportation system but has also helped shape a culture of innovation, service delivery, and safety. I look forward to seeing the difference you can make in Maryland's Department of Transportation.

Recently, I raised concerns with the previous leadership of MDOT about the exorbitant E-ZPass fees many Marylanders are facing that attach to each toll violation. For background, numerous constituents have contacted my office with notification of outrageous E-ZPass bills, including bills as high as \$20,000. These individuals have E-ZPass bills that are sent to Central Collection Unit (CCU), which have become impossible to pull back, once sent.

In continuing conversations, I hear regularly about the challenges Marylanders face in understanding their bills and managing the fees and penalties associated with unpaid tolls. While it is essential that commuters pay the tolls they accrue, with interest or a single fee attached to the account, it's essential that Marylanders do not feel hopeless or overburdened by a mandate that is intended to improve the quality of roads. When these bills are sent to CCU, the amount collected is distributed into the general fund.

To better serve my constituents, I am requesting additional clarity and data from your office in the form of a chart, including detailed breakdown of round-trip toll costs for a day, month, and six months with an inactive or absent transponder for the following commuter scenarios:

- a constituent traveling five days per week from Harford County to Annapolis
- a constituent traveling five days per week from Harford County to Washington, D.C.

This will offer a clear picture of the rate of accrual. In addition, I would appreciate clarification on current practices:

- Within the E-ZPass app, DriveEzMD, is there an opportunity to implement a more consumer-friendly systems that would enable second-chance billing, a standardized billing date, and/or the ability to have a backup payment card on file in case of insufficient funds. If not, what are the blockades to implementing this?
- When issues arise with an account, are alerts received by text, email, and mail, or only one of these methods?
- Does the DriveEzMD app have the ability to provide immediate notification (text or push alert) the moment a toll is unpaid or a card on file is declined, so commuters can update payment information promptly? This could significantly alter the relationship between Marylanders and E-ZPass, as it would enable individuals to address concerns immediately and E-ZPass the opportunity to more efficiently collect funds.

My constituents deserve a fair, transparent system that doesn't allow small oversights to snowball into overwhelming debt. I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your response so that we can work toward solutions that protect hardworking Marylanders while ensuring tolls are collected efficiently.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink. The signature consists of the initials "J.B." followed by "Sen." and a large, stylized, looping flourish that extends to the right.

Senator J.B. Jennings