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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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Sent via Electronic Mail

The Honorable Paul J. Wiedefeld
Secretary, Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, MD 21076

Dear Secretary Wiedefeld,

I'm reaching out to share growing concerns from constituents regarding E-ZPass fines, specifically, the significant burden these fines pose once accounts are transferred to the Central Collection Unit (CCU). While we all agree that tolls must be paid, the current system can result in penalties that far exceed the original toll amount, often catching people off guard and leaving them with unmanageable debt.

I've heard from individuals who now owe tens of thousands of dollars, many of whom were unaware of issues with their accounts until the fines had ballooned due to compounding late fees. These are not people trying to game the system; they are working Marylanders already struggling to keep up with rising BGE bills, food prices, and other basic expenses. When these cases are handed to CCU, the path forward becomes even more difficult, with few options for resolution or relief.

I understand that Md. Ann. Code, Trans. §21-1414(h)(2) does provide MDTA with the statutory authority to recall a delinquent account from the Central Collection Unit in certain circumstances, including mitigating factors as determined by MDTA; however, MDTA's authority to "adjust" the outstanding debt owed is limited. Additionally, COMAR 11.07.07.08 allows MDTA to waive any portion of the video toll due or civil penalty assessed until the Authority refers the debt to CCU, and if the Authority receives documentation which supports the waiver request. These regulations also provide specific circumstances under which a waiver may be granted.

Although MDOT may not currently have the authority to recall cases from CCU, I believe there is an opportunity here to re-evaluate the enforcement approach. Instead of relying heavily on escalating fees and third-party collections, could we consider a simpler, more equitable solution, such as applying a single late penalty and then suspending vehicle registration renewal until tolls are paid? This would create a clear, enforceable consequence without placing families in financial peril.

Maryland works best when we work with people, not against them. I know you share the goal of a fair and efficient transportation system, and I appreciate your willingness to look at policies through the lens of how they affect everyday Marylanders.

If addressing this issue requires legislative action, I would welcome the opportunity to work with you and your department during the 2026 legislative session to find meaningful solutions.

I look forward to your thoughts on how MDOT can take steps toward a more balanced, compassionate approach to toll enforcement.

Sincerely,

J.B. Sen.


Senator J.B. Jennings