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**MDTA BOARD APPROVES PUBLIC HEARINGS,
COMMENT PERIOD FOR NEW TOLL PAYMENT OPTIONS**

*Lower Toll Rates, New Discount and New Payment Option
Part of Third Package of Toll Relief Under Hogan Administration*

BALTIMORE, MD – With a toll modernization system coming online next year, the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) Board today voted to seek public comment and hold hearings on a package of toll payment options that would provide cost savings for customers. Last week, Governor Larry Hogan outlined how this toll relief package would save Marylanders more than \$28 million over five years.

“We’re making this technology work for Marylanders, saving our families money and time and providing the best possible service to our customers,” said MDTA Chairman and Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) Secretary Pete K. Rahn.

The public comment period begins Aug. 1 for the new tolling options proposed during the MDTA Board’s monthly meeting. These proposals include:

- **Pay By Plate.** This new payment method allows tolls to be automatically billed to credit cards at the same rate that cash customers pay today. For the all-electronic Intercounty Connector/MD 200 and I-95 Express Toll Lanes, customers who use this method will pay 20 percent less than the Video Toll rate. Pay By Plate benefits infrequent toll customers as well as those who do not want to maintain a prepaid *E-ZPass* balance. This option would be available by June 2020.
- **New vehicle classes with lower rates.** Toll rates would be reduced 50 percent for motorcycles, and would be cut 25 and 17 percent, respectively, for “light” vehicles towing one- and two-axle trailers, such as those used for watercraft or landscaping equipment. These new categories would take effect by September 2020.
- **Discount for Early Payment of Video Tolls.** A 15 percent discount for Video Tolling customers who pay the toll before their invoices are mailed would take effect by December 2020. Since MDTA won’t have to send out a bill, the agency can pass these savings on to the customer.

“In addition to lower toll rates, a new discount and an entirely new way to pay, these options address a concern we’ve heard from our customers for years – being able to set rates that better reflect the size of vehicles and their wear-and-tear on our roads,” said MDTA Executive Director James F. Ports, Jr.

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Beginning Aug. 1, customers can visit mdta.maryland.gov to submit comments online regarding the new toll payment proposals, or can download a comment card to be mailed. In September, a series of nine public hearings will take place in Harford, Cecil, Baltimore, Anne Arundel, Queen Anne's, Prince George's, Charles and Montgomery counties and in Baltimore City. Dates, times and locations will be advertised online and in local media.

The public comment period will close at 5 p.m. Oct. 3. A Toll Hearing Final Report will be submitted Oct. 31 for review by the MDTA Board and will be posted at mdta.maryland.gov for additional public comment. The Board is scheduled to vote on a final recommendation at its Nov. 21 meeting.

The new package of \$28 million in savings would be the third round of toll relief during the Hogan Administration, resulting in total savings to customers of up to \$344 million. Previous measures included a 2015 toll rollback to save Marylanders \$270 million by 2020, and a 2018 initiative for free *E-ZPass* transponders designed to save drivers \$46 million over five years.

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