

Governor Hogan Announces Study for New Chesapeake Bay Crossing, Unveils Maryland's New License Plate

Study to Identify Bay Crossing Location; New Plate Proudly Features Maryland Flag

ANNAPOLIS, MD – Governor Larry Hogan today announced the start of a study that will identify the location and explore potential funding options for a new Chesapeake Bay crossing. The \$5 million “Tier 1 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)” Study, which was voted on and approved by the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) Board last week, will begin this fall and take up to 48 months to complete. Following today’s announcement held overlooking the Bay Bridge, Governor Hogan also unveiled a new Maryland license plate design.

“Marylanders all across the state depend on being able to cross the Chesapeake Bay, but the reality is that there is simply too much traffic, and that it will continue to get worse,” said Governor Hogan. “This Tier 1 study is the critical first step needed in order to move forward on addressing the long-range issue of future traffic congestion on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge.”

NEPA requires state and federal agencies to consider the environmental consequences of proposed projects as part of their decision-making. It provides the flexibility to assess projects in a staged approach. The Tier 1 study will pursue environmental regulatory agency concurrence and agreement from the Eastern Shore counties on one crossing location. The study will include traffic, engineering, and environmental analyses; cost-per-mile estimates; preliminary financing and procurement options; and an economic and land-use study.

“The Bay Bridge can be maintained safely through 2065 with preservation and maintenance work; however, studies show that by 2040, motorists could experience up to 14-mile delays,” said Maryland Department of Transportation Secretary Pete K. Rahn. “This is the first step in a long process to address the demand for additional capacity across the Chesapeake Bay.”

The MDTA – the agency that finances, owns, operates, and maintains the state’s eight toll facilities – will conduct the study, and more information will be available on mdta.maryland.gov as the Tier 1 NEPA study progresses. Extensive public and community outreach efforts will include focus groups, listening tours, public workshops, a project website, newsletters, and fact sheets.

Following the announcement, Governor Hogan unveiled Maryland’s new license plate design, which will feature the Maryland flag front and center. The Maryland Department of Transportation’s Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) will start issuing the new plate on Monday, September 26 for all passenger cars, SUVs, trucks, motorcycles, and multipurpose vehicles.

“You would be hard pressed to find another state that has more pride than our great state of Maryland,” said Governor Hogan. “Earlier this year we launched our newly redesigned, state-of-the-art, Maryland-themed driver’s licenses, using our beautiful flag for inspiration. Now, Marylanders will have yet another way to show their state pride, with our new ‘Maryland Proud’ standard-issue license plate.”

The new plate meets all state standards and has passed all law-enforcement testing for readability. The new standard-issue plate will replace the War of 1812 plate, but customers who want to keep their existing plates do not need to get the new plate. Those who want to replace their existing license plates will pay the current \$20 replacement cost. Registration renewal costs remain unchanged. All vehicles

purchased on/after September 26 will be issued the new plate unless customers want to transfer their existing plates to their vehicles.

“We think these beautifully designed plates will be very popular and strongly encourage our customers to skip the trip to the MVA and order them online,” said Secretary Rahn.

The War of 1812 plate was first issued in June 2010 and was scheduled to be in circulation during the Star Spangled commemoration. It is standard practice to update the Maryland license plate every few years. All Maryland license plates are manufactured by Maryland Correctional Enterprises, a division of the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. MVA issues approximately 740,000 sets of license plates per year.

To order the new Maryland Proud plate **after September 26**, visit the MVA website at mva.maryland.gov and click Online Services.