

Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., *Governor*
Michael S. Steele, *Lt. Governor*



Robert L. Flanagan, *Secretary*
Neil J. Pedersen, *Acting Administrator*

May 6, 2003

Federal Highway Administration
Office of Transportation Operations
400 Seventh Street, SW. HOTO
Washington DC 20590

RE: Request to Experiment
Chesapeake Bay Bridge
Toll-Sponsored "Pilot" Program

Dear Sir/Madam:

The Maryland Transportation Authority in partnership with the Maryland State Highway Administration, in an effort to alleviate traffic congestion at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, is contemplating the institution of a pre-paid toll period for summer weekends. As a forerunner, a pilot project is being planned for testing and evaluation.

Due to the financial and legal restraints placed upon the Authority's operations, any toll-free period must be pre-paid to the Authority. To accomplish this it is proposed that the toll costs be underwritten by a sponsor, through the extending of "Invitations for Bids" (IFB) by the Authority. It is expected that in return for the financial assistance being provided, the sponsor will be named on appropriate signs and through other media outlets, such as the CHART traffic flow status reporting.

We are requesting FHWA approval of the experimental use of the toll underwriter's identification on the signs that will be posted along the approaches to the Bay Bridge. While such name usage will have a recognition value, we emphasize that the goal is congestion mitigation. It is our belief, that relief from the toll will cause a shifting of traffic flow from the periods of greater congestion to those having unused capacity.

The IFB will indicate that the underwriter will be recognized on the signs. Specific information on the proposed dates and times of the pre-paid operations experimental schedule are contained in the enclosed statement. Also included is an illustration of the proposed signing layouts, dimensions and locational information, and the details of our evaluation plan.

My telephone number/toll-free number is **410-787-5915**
Maryland Relay Service for Impaired Hearing or Speech 1.800.735.2258 Statewide Toll Free

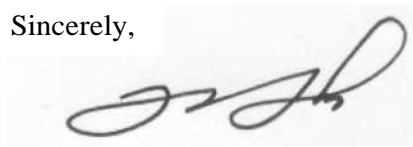
Street Address: 707 North Calvert Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21202 • Phone 410.545.0300 • www.marylandroads.com

Federal Highway Administration
Page Two

Our plan has been developed in conjunction with the local FHWA office. We appreciate their input and look forward to their continued comments and guidance throughout the evaluation process.

We look forward to the approval of this experimentation plan. If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 410-787-5815 or thicks@sha.state.md.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'THICKS', is centered below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Thomas Hicks, P.E., Director
Office of Traffic & Safety

TH:eth

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Nelson Castellanos
Mr. Tom Osborne
Mr. Douglas R. Rose
Mr. Joe Waggoner

CHESAPEAKE BAY BRIDGE TOLL SPONSORSHIP "PILOT" PROGRAM
REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO EXPERIMENT WITH A NEW TRAFFIC
CONTROL DEVICE (OPERATION)

I. NATURE OF PROBLEM.

US 50/301 at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge (William Preston Lane, Jr. Memorial Bridge) is a heavily congested route used by commuters and summer recreational traffic. As such, peak period traffic volumes have increased to a point where long traffic queues are generated on eastbound US 50/301 on Friday evenings. The popular public opinion is that the queues are a result of the toll plaza located along eastbound US 50/301, just to the west of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. Travel delays, fuel consumption, run-off-the-road accidents and residual congestion are just a few of the historical problems experienced. Operational modifications to reduce congestion such as a conversion from two-way to one-way tolling, maximization of the number of toll lanes at the plaza and implementation of electronic toll collection have been instituted. However, increasing congestion queues have created the necessity to explore additional innovative operational modifications to reduce congestion and improve safety along the US 50/301 approach to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge.

The Maryland Department of Transportation and the Maryland Transportation Authority propose to initiate a pilot "toll sponsorship" program in an effort to reduce congestion queuing along eastbound US 50/301. The pilot "toll sponsorship" program will encourage off-peak travel by permitting the free flow of traffic through the toll barrier during off-peak periods. Pursuant to the Authority's Trust Agreement for the benefit of its bondholders, and the debt service requirements thereunder, free vehicular passage over the Chesapeake Bay Bridge is generally prohibited. Therefore, a third party is being solicited to pre-pay customers' tolls in advance of the customers' passage through the toll plaza. Any such third party is being offered certain exposure rights associated with the toll pre-payment, including the appearance of the third party's name and/or logo on signs informing motorists of the pre-paid toll.

II. PROPOSED CHANGE TO TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICE

All potential third party sponsors have been advised in the invitation for bids for toll sponsorship that signs within the highway right-of-way are required to comply with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and the 1965 Federal Highway Beautification Act. In compliance with the MUTCD, all signs on the highway right-of-way shall be the informational white-on-blue color, rectangular in shape and composed of the following message:

<DAY> <TIME> TO <DAY> <TIME>
TOLLS PAID BY
<THIRD PARTY>

The Maryland State Highway Administration, pursuant to Maryland law, has interpreted the naming of the "THIRD PARTY" in text and/or logo format for purposes of the pilot program not to constitute commercial advertising in the public right-of-way. The MUTCD, Section 1A.03 states that: "Highway agencies may develop word message signs to notify road users of special regulations..." and the Maryland Supplement to the MUTCD, Section 2G-5.2 states that: "Logo signs are considered informational, not advertising. Advertising slogans *shall* not be permitted on any highway."

The proposed signs are intended to inform the traveling motorist of a change in regulation, i.e., toll collection discontinued during designated time periods. The signs will be utilized to acknowledge third party participation in the pilot "toll sponsorship" program and will not be used to generate revenue above and beyond the estimated toll revenue that is expected to be collected during the test period.

III. ILLUSTRATION

Proposed sign layouts, dimensions and location information are attached.

IV. DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Sign color is in compliance with the MUTCD Sections 1A.12 and 2A.11.
Sign shape is in compliance with the MUTCD Section 2A.10.
Text size is in compliance with the MUTCD Sections 2A.14 and 2E.13.
Sign layout is in compliance with the MUTCD Sections 2E.14 and 2E.15.

V. LEGAL STATEMENT

Please see the affidavit of the Maryland State Highway Administration Director of the Office of Traffic Safety, attached.

VI. EXPERIMENT SCHEDULE

The operational test will be implemented during the Summer of 2003. Each off-peak pre-paid toll period will begin on a Friday night at 7 P.M. and end on the following Saturday at 7 A.M. Alternatively, the pre-paid toll period may be shortened to begin on Friday night at 7 PM and end at midnight to reduce the third party cost. The proposed test period will include one weekend in June, up to four weekends in July and up to five weekends in August, all in 2003.

VII. DETAILS OF THE EVALUATION PLAN

The Maryland Department of Transportation and the Maryland Transportation Authority propose to measure the effectiveness of the pilot "toll sponsorship" program by comparing weekend traffic volumes (throughput), queues, delays and

safety data collected during the pilot "toll sponsorship" weekends against data from "normal" (control) weekends. The specific measures include:

1. Traffic volume (throughput) measured at the toll plaza and across the Chesapeake Bay Bridge.
2. Queues and delays measured at the toll plaza.
3. Safety measured through the number of incidents within the study area.

Historical data sets will be utilized if available. In addition, traffic volume data will be collected on a Thursday, Friday and Saturday for each of the pilot "toll sponsorship" implementation weekends and for a "normal" (control) weekend in May and another in June. If the pilot "toll sponsorship" program is not implemented on all weekends in July or August, data will be collected for at least one additional "normal" (control) weekend. Vehicle speed data will be collected during the same time period as the traffic volume data. Queue and Delay data will be collected periodically during peak travel periods. On a "normal" weekend, the peak travel period is expected to be Friday 3 PM to 7 PM and Saturday 6 AM to 2PM. During the pilot "toll sponsorship" program, the peak travel period is expected to be Friday 3 PM to 9 PM and Saturday 5 AM to 2 PM. Data on all accident incidents reported to the Maryland Transportation Authority Police will be collected from midnight Friday to midnight Sunday.

VIII. AGREEMENT TO RESTORE THE SITE

The Maryland Department of Transportation and the Maryland Transportation Authority agree to remove all signs related to the pilot "toll sponsorship" program from the US 50/301 highway right-of-way by November 30, 2003. If at any time during the pilot "toll sponsorship" program, the Maryland Department of Transportation, the Maryland Transportation Authority or the Federal Highway Administration, Office of Transportation Operations determines that significant safety concerns are directly or indirectly attributable to the experimentation hereunder, the Maryland Department of Transportation and Maryland Transportation Authority agree to terminate the program and to remove all signs related to the program from the US 50/301 highway right-of-way within twenty-four (24) hours of such termination.

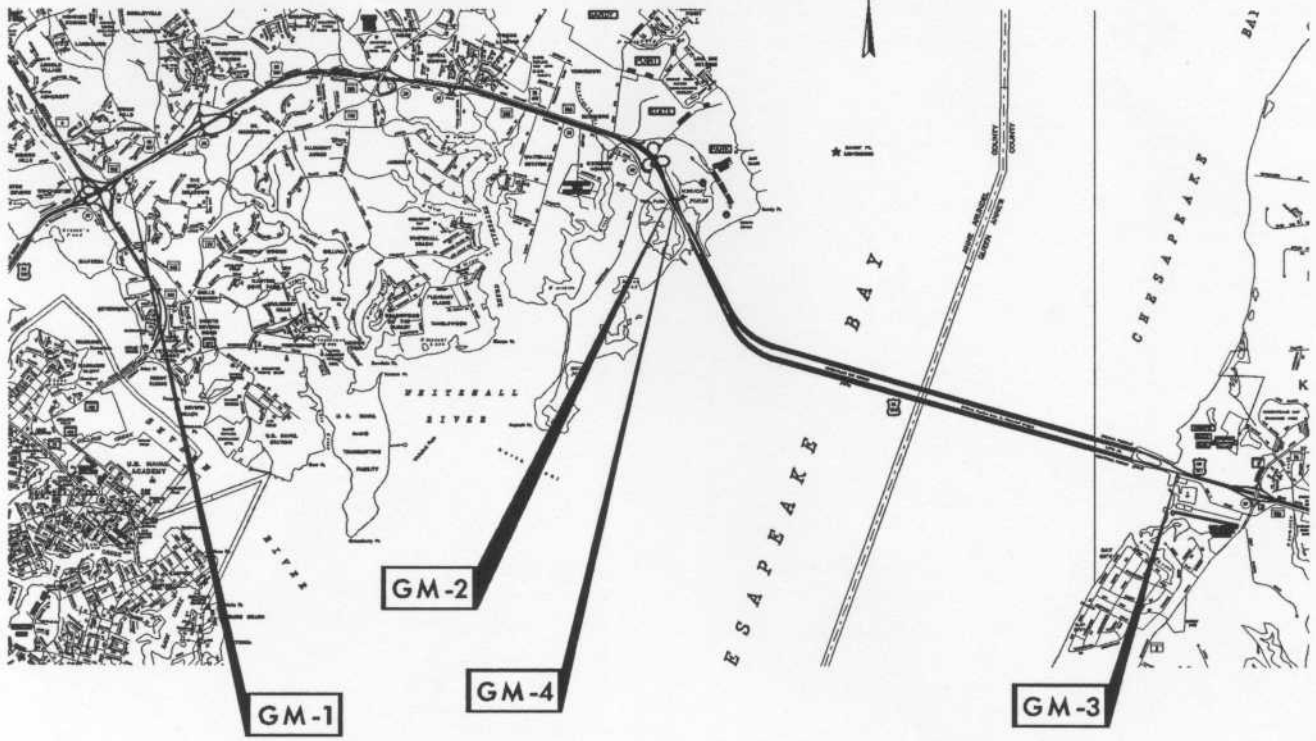
IX. AGREEMENT TO PROVIDE PROGRESS REPORTS

The Maryland Department of Transportation and the Maryland Transportation Authority agree to provide the Federal Highway Administration with copies of the draft and final "Chesapeake Bay Bridge Toll Sponsorship "Pilot" Program - Congestion Reduction" report. The draft report will be submitted by October 31, 2003 and the final report by December 31, 2003.

Attachments:


1. Proposed sign layouts, dimensions and location information.
2. Affidavit of the Maryland State Highway Administration Director of the Office of Traffic Safety.

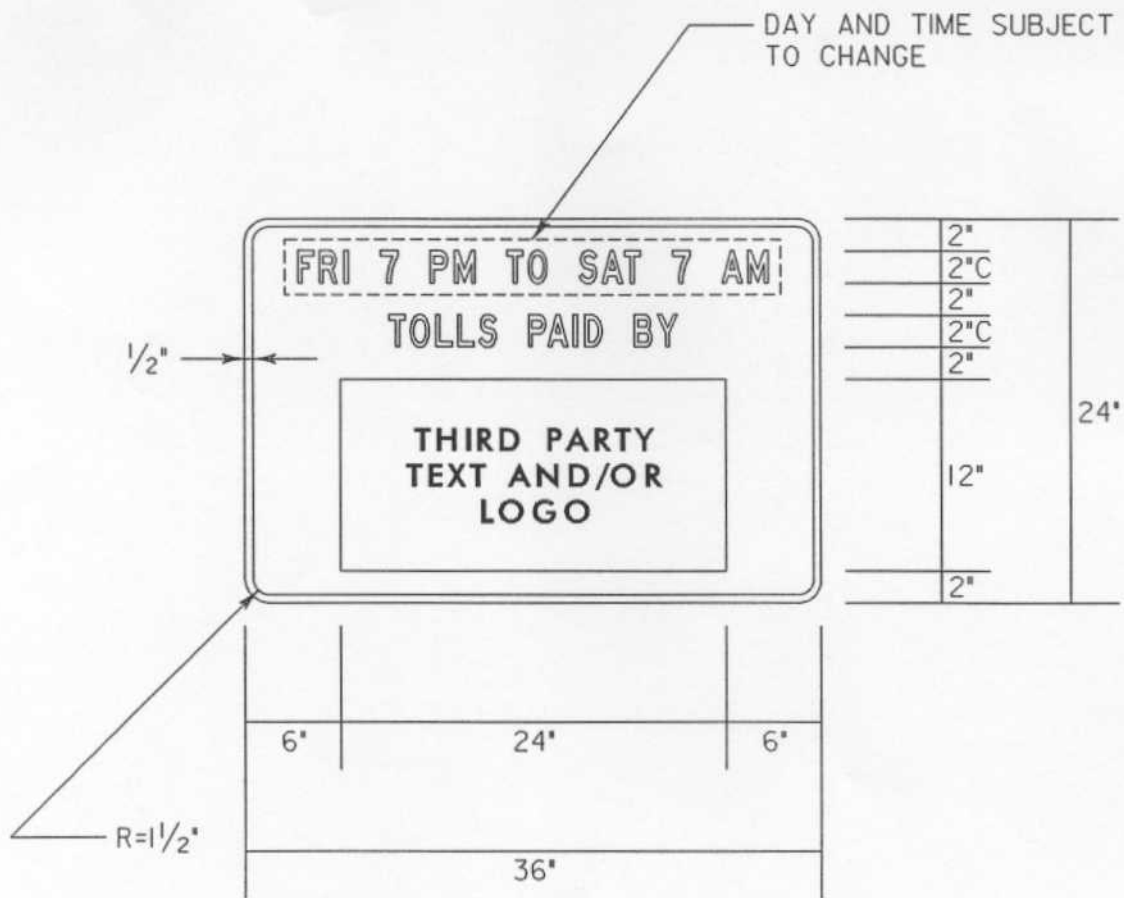
TOLL SPONSORSHIP SIGN LOCATIONS



NOTES:


1. SIGN GM-1 IS LOCATED ALONG EASTBOUND US 50 APPROXIMATELY 875' EAST OF MD 2 ON-RAMP.
2. SIGN GM-2 IS INSTALLED ON THE FRONT WINDOW OF EACH TOLL BOOTH.
3. SIGN GM-3 IS A PARTIAL OVERLAY OF AN EXISTING SIGN LOCATED ALONG EASTBOUND US 50 APPROXIMATELY 500' FROM THE SHORELINE ON THE EASTERN SHORE.
4. SIGN GM-4 IS LOCATED ALONG WESTBOUND US 50 APPROXIMATELY 150' EAST OF THE TOLL PLAZA.
5. SEE SIGN DETAILS FOR SIGN SIZES, LAYOUT, AND MESSAGES.

	APPROVED		REVISIONS:		MARYLAND TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY DIVISION OF ENGINEERING	
	/S/	5/7/03	DATE	APPROVAL		
	MDTA DIRECTOR - ENGINEERING	DATE			TOLL SPONSORSHIP SIGN LOCATIONS	
	/S/	5/7/03	DATE	APPROVAL		
SHA DIRECTOR - TRAFFIC & SAFETY	DATE					
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION	DATE					

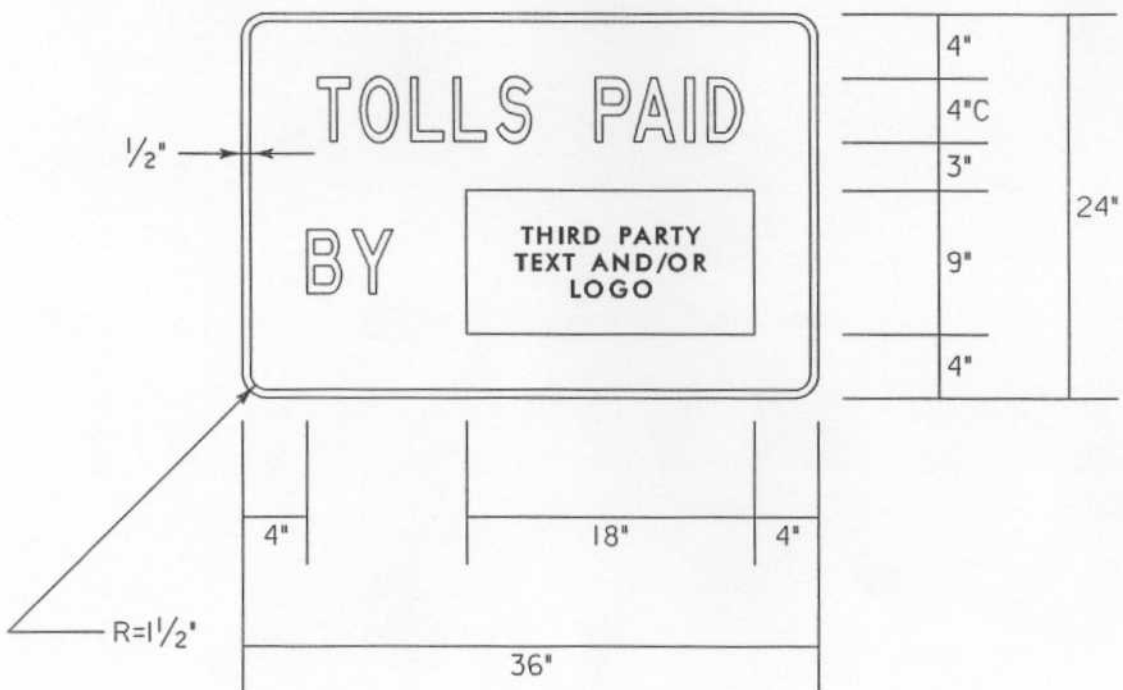


COLORS

LEGEND - WHITE
 BACKGROUND - BLUE


	APPROVED		REVISIONS:		MARYLAND TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY DIVISION OF ENGINEERING
	/S/	5/7/03	DATE	APPROVAL	
	MdTA DIRECTOR - ENGINEERING	DATE			TOLL SPONSORSHIP SIGN GM-2 (OPTION 1)
/S/	5/7/03	DATE		FIGURE 2	
SHA DIRECTOR - TRAFFIC & SAFETY	DATE				
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION	DATE				

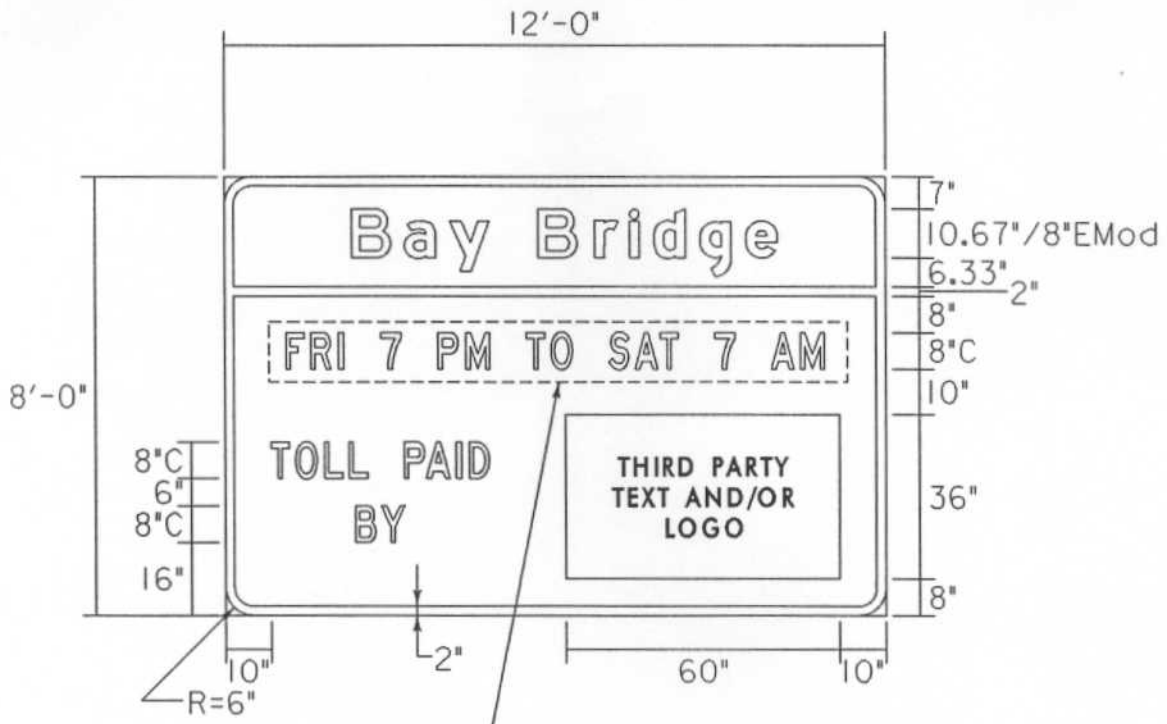
*NOTE: SIGN MAY ONLY BE DISPLAYED DURING PRE-PAID TOLL SPONSORSHIP PERIODS



COLORS

LEGEND - WHITE
BACKGROUND - BLUE


	APPROVED		REVISIONS:		MARYLAND TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY DIVISION OF ENGINEERING
	<i>/S/</i> MDTA DIRECTOR - ENGINEERING	5/7/03 DATE	DATE	APPROVAL	
	<i>/S/</i> SHA DIRECTOR - TRAFFIC & SAFETY	5/7/03 DATE			TOLL SPONSORSHIP SIGN GM-2 (OPTION 2)
	FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION	DATE			

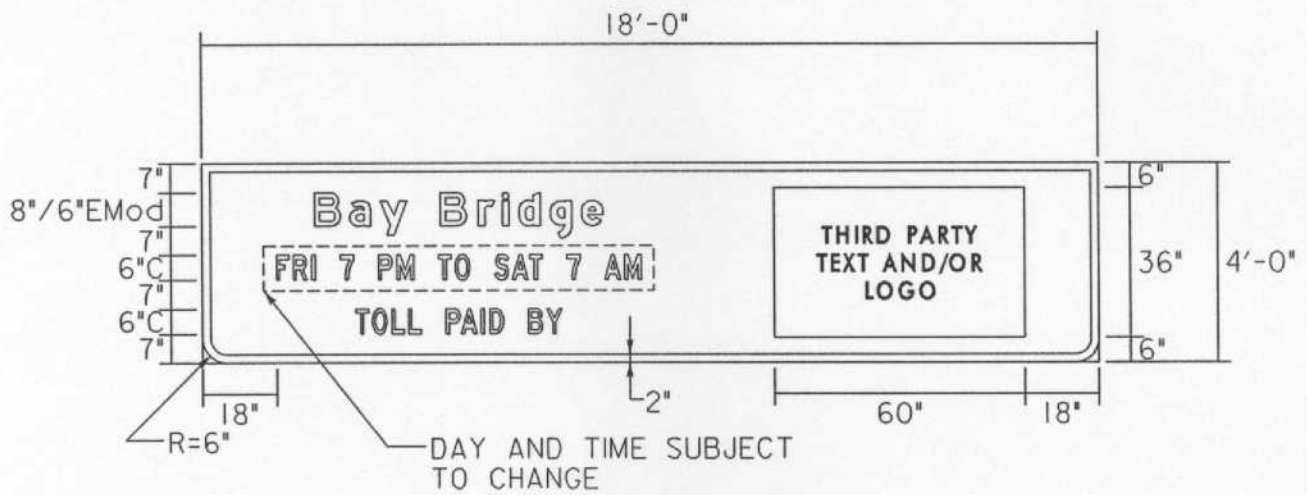


DAY AND TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE

COLORS


LEGEND - WHITE
 BACKGROUND - BLUE

	APPROVED		REVISIONS:		MARYLAND TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY DIVISION OF ENGINEERING
	/S/	5/7/03	DATE	APPROVAL	
	MdTA DIRECTOR - ENGINEERING	DATE			TOLL SPONSORSHIP SIGN GM-1 & GM-4
/S/	5/7/03	DATE			
SHA DIRECTOR - TRAFFIC & SAFETY	DATE				
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION	DATE				



COLORS

LEGEND - WHITE
 BACKGROUND - BLUE

	APPROVED		REVISIONS:		MARYLAND TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY DIVISION OF ENGINEERING
	/S/	5/7/03	DATE	APPROVAL	
	MJTA DIRECTOR - ENGINEERING	DATE			TOLL SPONSORSHIP SIGN GM-3
/S/	5/7/03	DATE			
SHA DIRECTOR - TRAFFIC & SAFETY	DATE				
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION	DATE				

CHESAPEAKE BAY BRIDGE TOLL SPONSORSHIP "PILOT" PROGRAM

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO EXPERIMENT WITH A NEW TRAFFIC CONTROL

DEVICE (OPERATION)


* * * * *

AFFIDAVIT OF THOMAS HICKS

Now comes Thomas Hicks, and states as follows:

1. That I, Thomas Hicks, am over 18 years old and am competent to testify to the matters contained herein.
2. That this Affidavit is made on my personal knowledge.
3. That I am the Director of the Office of Traffic Safety for the Maryland State Highway Administration.
4. That I am familiar with the traffic control devices contained in the 2003 Chesapeake Bay Bridge Toll Sponsorship "Pilot" Program Request for Permission to Experiment with a New Traffic Control Device (Operation) that is being submitted by the Maryland Department of Transportation and the Maryland Transportation Authority to the Federal Highway Administration pursuant to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) Section IA. 10.
5. That the traffic control devices referenced in Paragraph 4, above, are not protected by a patent or by a copyright.

I do solemnly swear and affirm under the penalties of perjury that the above statements are true and correct to the best of my personal knowledge and belief.



Thomas Hicks
Director
Office of Traffic and Safety
Maryland State Highway Administration

STATE OF MARYLAND

COUNTY OF

Anne Arundel

I,

Maura Shel

Notary Public in and for the above named

County and State, do hereby certify that on this day personally appeared before me Thomas Hicks, with whom I am personally acquainted who, being by me duly sworn, says that he is the Director of the Office of Traffic and Safety for the Maryland State Highway Administration Authority and solemnly swears or affirms under the penalties of perjury that the above statements are true and correct to the best of his personal knowledge and belief.

WITNESS my hand and notarial seal, this the 7th day of May, 2003.



Maura Shel

notary Public

My Commission Expires:

11/1/05