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**MDTA TO BEAT ANOTHER SUMMER GOAL FOR BAY BRIDGE DRIVERS:
NEW ALL-ELECTRONIC TOLLING SYSTEM LAUNCHES MAY 12**

Save Time on New Highway-Speed Lanes / Save Money by Signing Up for E-ZPass at ezpassmd.com

BALTIMORE, MD (May 5, 2020) – Fulfilling Governor Larry Hogan’s directive to deliver all-electronic (cashless) tolling at the Bay Bridge by summer 2020, the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) announced today that the bridge’s new full-time all-electronic system will go live Tuesday, May 12, weather permitting. Since March 17, in an effort to promote social distancing during the COVID-19 emergency, temporary cashless tolling has been in place statewide to protect drivers and toll collectors by eliminating interaction at the toll booths. MDTA frontline employees and contractors have been working hard during this public health emergency to keep this and other critical infrastructure projects on schedule. The permanent all-electronic tolling system at the Bay Bridge includes three highway-speed traffic lanes that will tie into the two existing lanes on the eastbound bridge and the one westbound contraflow (two-way) lane. Crews recently installed the new overhead tolling gantry across eastbound US 50 between the bridge and MD 8 and are completing software installation and testing.

With all-electronic tolling, drivers don’t stop at toll booths. Tolls are collected via the overhead gantry through *E-ZPass*® and Video Tolling payment methods. The system provides convenience for motorists, less engine idling for better fuel efficiency and reduced emissions, decreased congestion and increased safety. Bay Bridge drivers will save a combined, estimated 42,000 hours annually with all-electronic tolling. They also can save money with *E-ZPass*® and pay as little as \$1.40 daily to cross the bridge. That’s why motorists should get ready now by enrolling in *E-ZPass*® Maryland at ezpassmd.com.

“As we convert Maryland toll facilities to all-electronic tolling, now is the time for cash customers to sign-up for *E-ZPass*® Maryland,” said MDTA Executive Director James F. Ports, Jr. “Thanks to previous money-saving initiatives by Governor Hogan, *E-ZPass*® Maryland customers pay no monthly fee and receive a free transponder.”

Even though full-time all-electronic tolling will begin May 12 at the Bay Bridge, the MDTA will extend the time drivers without *E-ZPass*® will be charged the cash rate of \$4, giving customers more time to sign up and get an *E-ZPass*® through the mail. Effective 30 days after Maryland’s COVID-19 state of emergency is lifted, bridge drivers without *E-ZPass*® will be charged the Video Toll rate of \$6. During non-summer months, up to 90 percent of Bay Bridge drivers already use *E-ZPass*® and, overall, 74 percent of Bay Bridge drivers are *E-ZPass*® customers. Effective July 1, non-*E-ZPass*® motorists also can take advantage of a new Pay by Plate payment option and an Early Payment Discount to save money compared to the Video Toll rate (see chart).

Bay Bridge Toll Rates (2-axle)				
<i>E-ZPass</i>® and Video Tolling			Additional Options Effective July 1, 2020	
<i>E-ZPass</i>® Discount Plan	<i>E-ZPass</i>®	Video Toll	Early Payment Discount (Compare to Video Toll)	Pay by Plate (Compare to Video Toll)
\$1.40	\$2.50	\$4*	\$5.10	\$4

*Video Toll rate will be \$6 effective 30 days after Maryland’s COVID-19 state of emergency is lifted.

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E-ZPass[®] Customer Service Centers, including those at Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration branches, are closed due to the COVID-19 state of emergency. MDTA will post updates and announce when the centers reopen at ezpassmd.com. The website also includes a list of retailers at grocery stores offering *E-ZPass*[®] On the Go, a ready-to-use transponder with a pre-paid toll balance of \$25.

Pay by Plate and Early Payment Discount

Customers can start using the new Pay by Plate payment method on July 1. The Pay by Plate payment option accommodates cash and infrequent customers, as well as those who prefer not to maintain an *E-ZPass*[®] prepaid account balance. Pay by Plate will allow customers to “pay as they go” by registering their license plate and credit card information. Pay by Plate customers with a 2-axle vehicle will pay \$4 compared to the \$6 Video Toll rate. More information on Pay by Plate will be provided this summer.

Also starting July 1, the Early Payment Discount provides customers with a 15% discount off the Video Toll rate when they pay their Notice of Toll Due within a specified timeframe and prior to the mailing of the notice. This discount essentially passes operational savings onto customers who proactively use a self-service option such as paying online or through MDTA’s interactive voice response phone system. In addition, a mobile app is coming soon.

Stay alert as summer approaches and construction continues

As construction remains underway in the Bay Bridge toll plaza area, the MDTA reminds motorists to obey all signs and speed limits. Following the opening of permanent all-electronic tolling on May 12, construction will include the removal of remaining toll booths and canopy and full roadway reconstruction. After the COVID-19 state of emergency is lifted and normal traffic volumes return to Maryland roadways, eastbound congestion is still expected at the bridge and along the US 50 corridor during peak times like summer weekends and during emergency incidents. Even with all-electronic tolling, the volume of vehicles will still exceed the capacity of the roadway during these busy travel times.

Implementation of the permanent all-electronic tolling system follows the announcement last month that the critical westbound right lane deck rehabilitation project on the Bay Bridge has been completed well in advance of the summer 2020 goal – and a year ahead of the initial construction schedule. That project also was accomplished amid the state’s response to COVID-19. During the state of emergency, MDTA and its contractors have worked to deliver this and other essential projects, leveraging the lower than normal traffic volumes while adhering to state and federal health and safety guidelines.

The Bay Bridge will be Maryland’s third toll facility converted to all-electronic tolling. The Francis Scott Key Bridge (I-695) in Baltimore and the Thomas J. Hatem Memorial Bridge (US 40) between Harford and Cecil counties went live with cashless tolling in October 2019. The Intercounty Connector (ICC/MD 200) in Montgomery and Prince George’s counties and the I-95 Express Toll Lanes in Baltimore have utilized all-electronic tolling since opening.

For the latest on Bay Bridge traffic, call 1-877-BAYSPAN (229-7726) or visit baybridge.com. Sign up for email/text alerts here <https://bit.ly/2Dh9EZn> or view real-time traffic camera images on MDTA roadways by visiting mdta.maryland.gov. For updates on major incidents follow the MDTA on Twitter at twitter.com/TheMDTA. Find us on Facebook at facebook.com/TheMDTA.