

MEMORANDUM

To: MITA Membership

From: Mike Nystrom, Executive Vice President

RE: Industry Work Zone Safety Dialogue

Date: November 12, 2020

This past weekend, our industry was once again sadly reminded that construction work zone safety is one of the biggest challenges that contractors face on a daily basis. The tragedy of two lost lives in a single incident, on top of numerous other industry losses in the last few years, has significantly heightened that awareness. Contractors and their employees from across the state have been reaching out to MITA staff this week with a passionate call for action that change needs to occur immediately.

As driver mobility concerns have grown along with the amount of work being performed across the state, so too has the number of work zone incidents. MITA staff, along with industry representatives of the Work Zone Safety Task Force (WZSTF), will be engaging in high level discussions with MDOT leadership over the next couple of weeks to propose significant specific safety related changes that need to occur in work zones. However, we need input from all of industry in order to make changes that are ultimately impactful and long-lasting.

We recognize that what might work for one sector of our industry, may not work for another, so we are not looking to offer broad stroke suggestions, but rather targeted ideas that will offer real change. We have heard from a variety of companies thus far, such as patching and CPM contractors, mainline paving (asphalt and concrete) companies, bridge builders as well as traffic control and pavement marking representatives.

Many ideas have been offered, including the elimination of nighttime work in certain categories, full closures/detours, added barriers and increased police presence, to name a few. To have your voice heard, we are asking you to submit your written comments to daniellecoppersmith@thinkmita.org or to call a MITA senior staff member.

One lost life in a work zone is too many; and, therefore, it is time for our industry to work together with MDOT to make thoughtful, yet substantive change.