

Debt Management

Under Sections 3.101 to 3.217, inclusive, of the Transportation Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) is authorized to issue Consolidated Transportation Bonds (CTBs). CTBs are fixed rate bonds with maturities of up to 15 years. CTBs do not constitute a debt or a pledge of the faith and credit of the State of Maryland. The principal and interest are paid from the proceeds of certain pledged taxes, fees, and other revenues in the Transportation Trust Fund. The aggregate amount of the outstanding and unpaid principal balance for CTBs is restricted by statute and by annual limits in the budget bill.

MDOT may also issue Certificates of Participation (COPs) in which MDOT enters into a lease agreement with a third party to lease an asset over a specified period of time at a predetermined amount. The lease payments pay the debt service principal and interest on the leased assets. COPs are fixed rate issuances with maturities of up to 25 years and typically secured by a specific revenue source.

In 2014, the General Assembly enacted legislation allowing the Department to issue transportation project revenue-backed bonds and pledge and use a dedicated revenue source, which may include revenues attributable to the facilities being financed, for the payment of the debt service on these bonds.

In the past, the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) and the Maryland Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO) have issued debt on behalf of MDOT. Limits for non-CTB debt (COPs, conduit issuances) are established each year by the General Assembly in the State budget.

The Department manages its CTB debt outstanding by two coverage tests: pledged taxes and net revenues. The pledged taxes test captures MDOT's portion of the Maryland corporation income tax, motor fuel tax, motor vehicle titling tax, and a portion of the State's sales and use tax on rental vehicles as compared to maximum annual debt service. The net revenues test is a ratio of total receipts of the Department (excluding federal aid, bond proceeds, or other receipts not available for debt service less administration, operating and maintenance expenses) to maximum annual debt service.

MDOT will not issue new CTB bonds unless both the pledged taxes of the prior fiscal year and the net revenues for the prior fiscal year are each equal to at least two times maximum annual debt service. Although both tests require 2.0 times coverage, the Department's administrative policy is to provide 2.5 times coverage. The additional coverage acts as a cushion against revenue and expense variations and thus allows time to adjust the financial strategies while maintaining the capital program.

Debt Ratings

The rating agencies have consistently assigned high ratings to MDOT debt. In the past, all three rating agencies (Standard and Poor's, Moody's, and Fitch) have cited MDOT's prudent management practices and strong coverage of debt service as major strengths. Standard and Poor's and Fitch note a stable outlook based on working cash levels and steady growth in revenues. In July 2024, Moody's US States and Territories rating methodology was changed for the MDOT Consolidated Transportation Bonds. This recent change has provided a rating increase with a negative outlook that aligns with the State of Maryland.

MDOT's Outstanding Debt Issuances

MDOT issues bonds to provide a portion of the capital funds needed for the Consolidated Transportation Program which MDOT has developed to provide comprehensive planning and coordinated implementation for the highway, transit, port and aviation activities of the State. Below is a list of MDOT's outstanding debt issuances.

	Outstanding as of June 30, 2024	Ratings S&P/Moody's/Fitch	Source of Payment
Consolidated Transportation Bonds***			
Series 2010B	\$ 18,200,000	AAA/Aaa/AA+	TTF
Series 2015 (2 nd)	71,395,000	AAA/Aaa/AA+	TTF
Series 2015 (3 rd)	183,755,000	AAA/Aaa/AA+	TTF
Series 2016	262,830,000	AAA/Aaa/AA+	TTF
Series 2016 RF	86,625,000	AAA/Aaa/AA+	TTF
Series 2017	180,780,000	AAA/Aaa/AA+	TTF
Series 2017 (2 nd)	320,635,000	AAA/Aaa/AA+	TTF
Series 2018	98,315,000	AAA/Aaa/AA+	TTF
Series 2018 (2 nd)	517,830,000	AAA/Aaa/AA+	TTF
Series 2019	431,735,000	AAA/Aaa/AA+	TTF
Series 2020	283,200,000	AAA/Aaa/AA+	TTF
Series 2021A	295,000,000	AAA/Aaa/AA+	TTF
Series 2021B RF	88,705,000	AAA/Aaa/AA+	TTF
Series 2022A Forward RF	39,885,000	AAA/Aaa/AA+	TTF
Series 2022B Forward RF	126,020,000	AAA/Aaa/AA+	TTF
Total Consolidated	\$3,004,910,000		
Certificates of Participation			
Series 2010 RF COPS Airport Facilities	1,650,000	AA+/Aa1/AA+	Airline Fees
Series 2010 RF COPS MTA Parking Garage	2,235,000	AA+/Aa1/AA+	Parking Fees
Series 2016 RF COPS Port * Warehouse	-	AA+/Aa1/AA+	Port Revenue
Series 2019 COPS BWI Airport Shuttle Buses	17,275,000	AA+/Aa1/AA+	TTF
Total COPS	\$21,160,000		
MAA Special Transportation Project Revenue Bonds			
MAA Rev RF Series 2021A	\$193,125,000	A1 (Moody's), A (Fitch)	Airport Revenues
MAA Rev Series 2021B	\$190,485,000	A1 (Moody's), A (Fitch)	Airport Revenues
Total MAA Special Transportation Project Revenue Bonds	\$383,610,000		

	Outstanding as of June 30, 2024	Ratings S&P/Moody's/Fitch	Source of Payment
Conduit Issuers			
MDTA Series 2002 Rental Car Facility *	59,990,000	A3 (Moody's)	Customer Fees
MDTA Series 2012 A PFC Bonds	25,660,000	A+/A2/A-	PFC Fees
MDTA Series 2012 B PFC Bonds	22,730,000	A+/A2/A-	PFC Fees
MDTA Series 2012 C PFC Bonds**	-	A+/A2/A-	PFC Fees
MDTA Series 2014 PFC Bonds	24,270,000	A+/A1/A-	PFC Fees
MDTA Series 2019 PFC Bonds	93,105,000	A+/A2/A-	PFC Fees
Total Conduit	\$225,755,000		

TTF = Transportation Trust Fund

PFC = Passenger Facility Charge

* Insured Financings; however, the ratings reflected above are the underlying ratings (prior to insurance by the underwriters).

** MDTA Series 2012 C PFC was defeased in September 2024

*** Moody's credit rating for CTBs was upgraded to Aaa on September 12, 2024

Debt Issuance Process

MDOT maintains a six-year financial plan, which contains a forecast of revenues and operating and capital expenditures. The forecast is a planning tool that enables MDOT to evaluate its long-term financial resources, identify projects to be funded, and develop a plan to cover required operating and capital expenditures. MDOT uses the forecast to plan debt issuances, ensuring that debt-financed projects do not exceed the permitted statutory level or internal debt controls. The Maryland Board of Public Works must approve all MDOT debt issuances.

The MDOT Office of Finance's Debt Management Unit works with MDOT's municipal advisor, principal counsel and bond counsel to prepare for the sale. This includes obtaining the rating from the rating agencies, preparing and publishing all required notices and advertisements, and preparing and distributing the Official Statement.

MDOT primarily uses an electronic bidding system for a competitive bid of the bonds. The award is granted to the bidder with the lowest true interest cost. MDOT may use a negotiated sale process for an issuance, as advised by the municipal advisor to the Department.