

THE WANADA BULLETIN

NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR AND ABOUT FRANCHISED NEW CAR DEALERS IN THE WASHINGTON AREA

WANADA Bulletin # 01-26

February 3, 2026

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Public Policy Day Anchors Opening of DC Auto Show

The 2026 Washington, DC Auto Show once again demonstrated why it is recognized as the automotive industry's premier Public Policy Show, beginning the week with a robust Public Policy Day and a series of dealer-focused events that set the tone for a successful run at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center.

Public Policy Day brought together policymakers, automakers, dealers, regulators, and media for substantive discussions on the future of transportation

and automotive retail. The program featured participation from U.S. Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy, NHTSA Administrator Jonathan Morrison, and Representatives Debbie Dingell and Bob Latta. Conversations focused on the intersection of public policy, technology, and consumer priorities - particularly affordability—highlighting the real-world implications policy decisions have on dealers and car buyers alike.

In conjunction with Public Policy Day, invited guests attended the annual Sneak Peek Preview, receiving an early look at the show floor, high-profile vehicle debuts, and expanded exhibitor displays before the show opened to the public.



US Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy (right) was central to one of the strongest Public Policy Day lineups in recent memory. Pictured with John Bozzella, CEO of The Alliance for Automotive Innovation.



Clockwise from top left: WANADA Vice President Joe Koch emcees Public Policy Day; Jamie Darvish of DARCARS participates in the Automotive State of the Union podcast; Public Policy Day also featured two exotic vehicle reveals, the 2026 Lamborghini Temerario and the 2026 Aston Martin Vantage Volante.



Clockwise from top left: Rep. Bob Latta (R-OH), Dave Shepardson (Reuters) and Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-MI) kick off Public Policy Day; the Public Policy Day crowd; DC Auto Show Chairman Bob Biagi (Ourisman Automotive) tours DOE Undersecretary Alex Fitzsimmons after his panel; Joe Koch, John O'Donnell, NHTSA Administrator Jonathan Morrison, NADA CEO Mike Stanton and Alliance CEO John Bozzella pose for a photo at the conclusion of Public Policy Day 2026.

That evening, WANADA hosted its annual Member Reception, welcoming dealers, managers, and industry partners for an evening of networking and camaraderie. The reception remains a signature WANADA event, offering members the opportunity to reconnect with colleagues and industry leaders while previewing the Auto Show in a relaxed, member-focused setting.

Together, Public Policy Day, Sneak Peek, and the Member Reception reinforced the central role of local dealers in national policy discussions and underscored the importance of continued engagement between the automotive industry and public officials.

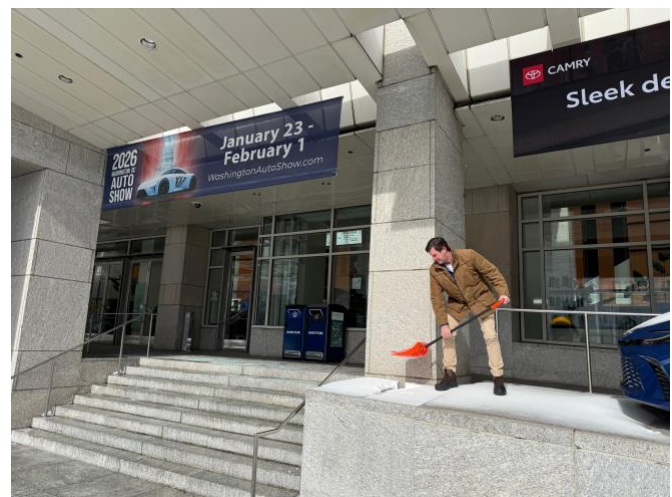


Clockwise from top left: Bob Hager (Ourisman Automotive) and Gordon Riddle (Safford Auto Group); WANADA's TIME Dealer of the Year for 2026 Melanie Funkhouser (Fair Oaks Motors); John Ourisman, Jamie Darvish and Bob Hager; WANADA CEO John O'Donnell with Rep. Jefferson Shreve (R-IN) who also stopped by the WANADA Member Reception.

Show Opening, Weather Challenges, and a Strong Finish

The 2026 Washington, DC Auto Show opened with strong consumer interest and finished on a high note, delivering excellent attendance across the final weekend despite bitterly cold temperatures and weather challenges earlier in the week.

Opening weekend drew enthusiastic crowds eager to explore new vehicle debuts,



WANADA CEO John O'Donnell pitches in to help clear the convention center.

expanded exhibitor participation, and interactive experiences throughout the show floor. A central theme this year was the America250 celebration, honoring 250 years of American history and the vehicles that have helped shape it. Manufacturers highlighted American innovation and heritage through prominent displays, including Chevrolet's Stars and Stripes initiative and an America250-branded Stellantis exhibit featuring Chrysler, Ram, and other iconic brands.

The show also featured a mix of returning and new exhibitors, including Harley-Davidson's first-ever appearance at the Washington, DC Auto Show in the Outdoor Pavilion, the welcomed return of Land Rover after a long absence, and expanded lifestyle and recreational vehicle offerings.



Clockwise from top left: Strong crowds characterized the DC Auto Show's final weekend; Auto Show Chairman Bob Biagi (Ourisman Automotive), DC Mayor Muriel Bowser, Jamie Darvish (DARCARS) and Haman Baniamam (Polestar DC); show guests checking out the latest Corvette; Mayor Bowser walks the show floor, visiting many of the show's exhibits and features.

Sunday morning a significant winter storm forced a temporary closure to prioritize the safety of guests, staff, exhibitors, and partners. Despite this disruption—and the frigid temperatures that followed—the show rebounded strongly, with excellent attendance through the final weekend. On Friday, January 30, Mayor Muriel Bowser visited the Auto Show, touring several exhibits including Art of Motion, Polestar, Land Rover and Volkswagen. Her visit underscored the Auto Show's importance not only as a consumer event, but also as a showcase for innovation, mobility, and community engagement in the District.

Product specialists reported that lead targets were largely met across the show. In cases where volume fell short, the quality of leads was notably higher, as attendees who braved the weather tended to be serious, purchase-ready shoppers.

As the show concluded, the strong finish reflected the resilience of the event, the appeal of the exhibit mix, and the continued enthusiasm of car shoppers—reinforcing the Washington, DC Auto Show’s value to dealers, manufacturers, and the region.

Tag & Title Seminar Highlights Compliance and Best Practices

As part of the 2026 Washington, DC Auto Show week, WANADA successfully hosted its Tag & Title Seminar, continuing its long-standing commitment to providing dealership staff with practical, compliance-focused education.

Presented in partnership with the National Independent Vehicle Title Agents (NIVTA), the seminar addressed current regulatory requirements, evolving titling and registration processes, and best practices to help dealerships manage risk and maintain operational efficiency. Attendees received timely guidance on documentation standards, compliance pitfalls, and process improvements that directly impact daily dealership operations. Representatives from DC, Maryland and Virginia motor vehicle agencies were onsite to present. For the first time, the US State Department also made a presentation on the proper titling procedures for diplomatic vehicles.



The seminar also provided a valuable forum for questions and peer discussion, allowing dealer staff to learn from industry experts and from one another.

The Tag & Title Seminar remains one of WANADA’s most valuable educational offerings, equipping dealership teams with the knowledge and tools needed to navigate an increasingly complex regulatory environment while delivering a smooth and compliant customer experience.

WANADA would like to especially thank the 2026 Tag & Title sponsors Auto Data Direct, Chesapeake Bay Trust, Solera and the National Independent Vehicle Title Agents (NIVTA).



Last Chance: Join Us at the NADA Show in Las Vegas!

2026 NADASHOW

LAS VEGAS • TUESDAY-FRIDAY • FEB 3-6

Join associations from Virginia, Maryland, and the Washington area for our joint reception in Las Vegas! Registration is open [here](#).

VADA/MADA/WANADA Reception

Thursday, Feb. 5, 2026

The Wynn Hotel | Pomerol Room

5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Steny Says Sayonara



John O'Donnell and Joe Koch represented WANADA at the Maryland Democrats' event in Annapolis on January 13, where Congressman Steny Hoyer formally announced his retirement. Throughout his career, Congressman Hoyer has been a respected voice on transportation and economic policy, and a valued partner to the automotive industry.

MD MVA Talking Points

The following bullets are excerpted from Maryland MVA's January 2026 "Talking Points" newsletter. We hope you find this information useful, and if you have a topic, you'd like us to cover in a future newsletter, please send it to Kristin Orlando-Dillahunt at korlando@mdot.maryland.gov.

Vehicle Services - Tips & Reminders

- When processing a title and registration transaction and the **customer has a trade-in**, the trade-in date should be the date the customer signed over the vehicle to the dealer. By doing this, it may prevent the creation of insurance violation notifications and/or cases and may automatically close any opened insurance lapse cases.
- It is necessary to complete a transmittal sheet (**VR-205 dated 8/22**) when uploading portal transactions. The MVA is looking to make an enhancement to the portal to create an electronic transmittal sheet when transactions are uploaded to the portal.
- When **salvage certificates** are submitted, the certificates will be batch printed and mailed to the customer. If the mailing address is different from the address on the application, please write the mailing address on the top of the form.
- When **portal work** is completed and the "Ready for pick-up" notification has been received, please pick up after 24 hours after receiving the pick-up notification.
- Title and registration documents must be retained for 3 years (the current year and three years after) as per bulletins dated [June 13, 2023](#) and [January 23, 2023](#). In accordance with Maryland Vehicle Law §15-105, licensees are required to retain title records (T1-T5 and duplicate titles) and registration transactions (Registration renewals, duplicate stickers, etc.), as well as voided transactions, for a period of 3 years. These records must be retained in their original format for the first year and then may be retained in an electronic format for the remaining 2 years. They shall be readily available for inspection and audit by authorized representatives of the state during normal business hours without advance notification.
- Federal regulations (49 CFR §580.8) require licensees to retain the odometer statement for at least 5 years. The federal odometer statement must also be retained in its original format for the first year and then may be retained in an electronic format for the remaining 4 years.

Business Licensing & Compliance Updates

- **Trade-In requirements**- The MVA has decided to pause any changes to the Trade-In requirements that had been previously discussed. The ERT vendors are aware of this pause as well.
- Later this month there will be changes to **inventory restock levels** for a select group of plate types. Instead of boxes of 25 plates, they will come in boxes of 5 plates. There will be a bulletin distributed with further details in the coming weeks. The ERT vendors are also aware of this change.
- **Voiding pending transactions in ERT**- Most ERT vendors offer a solution in their software that will allow you to void a Pending transaction and then re-submit a new transaction with all of the original data. This will make it easier if you need to

correct a field within a pending transaction. Please contact your specific ERT vendor if you have any questions regarding this or need assistance.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Can we not have NMVTIS reporting when only a temporary tag has been issued?**
 - The vehicle information is not reported to NMVTIS until a title is printed; the vehicle information does not get reported to NMVTIS if a temporary tag is issued.
- **Why do we have to add money in the portal before the deal is approved? If the deal is not approved, it takes a while to receive a refund.**
 - In order for transactions to be completed, we will need the funds to be added to the drawdown account so the transactions can be completed. If there is a question about a transaction prior to submitting it in the portal, please email MDDTTS@mdot.maryland.gov or call the branch where the work is submitted.
- **Why do the plate types not populate when putting in tag numbers?**
 - In order for this to be an option, we would have to make changes to the MVA system as well as request the ERT vendors to make the change.
- **Why are some plates showing an expiration date of 12/1/1900?**
 - We have asked our development team about this issue, but they did not find this to be an issue. If this continues to be an issue, please submit examples to srichardsmarks@mdot.maryland.gov.

Opportunity for Public Comments – Proposed Changes to Late Titling Fees

MVA is proposing to establish and standardize assessing fines on dealers and title service agents for submitting late transactions. The proposed changes are to Code of Maryland Regulations 11.12.07.01B.

.01 Standards.

- A. (text unchanged)
- B. [For submission of titling] *Failure to submit title and registration data, fees, and taxes, [in addition to §A of this regulation, the Administration shall consider the degree of lateness.] may result in a standard fine which is assessed at a rate of:*
 - (1) *For a tag and title service that submits transaction information later than required by the contract between the tag and title service and the Administration, the standard fine shall be:*
 - (a) *For the first late day after the requirement to submit by contract, \$30; and*
 - (b) *Increased by \$1 per day thereafter.*
 - (2) *For a dealership that submits transaction information later than 30 days after the transaction date, the standard fine shall be:*
 - (a) *For the first day after 30 days, \$30; and*
 - (b) *Increased by \$1 per day thereafter.*
- C. *Fines levied in §B of this regulation are the standard fines and can be adjusted as determined by the Administration based on circumstance. Nothing in this section limits additional administrative action as determined by the Administration including license suspension and revocation.*

The text in italics is proposed text, and the text in brackets is text proposed for deletion.

If you have comments on these proposed changes, please send them to Tracey C. Sheffield, Regulations Coordinator, MVA, 6601 Ritchie Highway N.E., Room 102, Glen Burnie MD 21062, or call 410.768.7545, or email tsheffield@mdot.maryland.gov. Comments will be accepted through January 26, 2026.

If you have a topic, you'd like us to cover in a future newsletter, please send it to Kristin Orlando-Dillahunt at korlando@mdot.maryland.gov.

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