

May 16, 2025

The Honorable Bill Ferguson
President of the Senate of Maryland
H-107 State House
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones
Speaker of the House of Delegates
H-101 State House
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear President Ferguson and Speaker Jones,

Pursuant to Article II, Section 17 of the Maryland Constitution, I hereby veto Senate Bill 168 – *Confined Aquatic Disposal Construction Moratorium*, House Bill 628 – *Highways – Sidewalks and Bicycle Pathways – Construction and Reconstruction*, and House Bill 1116 – *Public Safety – State Clearinghouse for Missing Persons*.

I am proud of working together to pass a balanced budget that addresses a projected structural deficit in the backdrop of alarming federal uncertainty; however, because of this context, I find it necessary to veto these bills as unnecessary and duplicative.

While I share the General Assembly's commitment to environmental stewardship and community engagement, Senate Bill 168 is premature and unnecessary. The Maryland Port Administration (MPA) is currently facilitating a comprehensive evaluation of Confined Aquatic Disposal (CAD) through the Dredged Material Management Program. This program includes a diverse CAD Subcommittee under the Bay Enhancement Working Group that is assessing the technical, environmental, and socio-economic aspects of CAD, with a final report expected in 2025. Given the state's current budget constraints, the MPA has no plans to expand dredged material capacity beyond existing projects; therefore, Senate Bill 168 is not needed to maintain conservation efforts to protect the Chesapeake Bay and support our environmental justice communities.

The intent to improve pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure is critical, and I commend the General Assembly's continued effort to address this. However, House Bill 628 introduces unnecessary redundancy and ambiguity into the existing authority of the State Highway Administration (SHA) to prioritize sidewalk improvement projects based on improving safety or increasing pedestrian access. Through the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan, SHA uses a data-driven, safety-focused approach to prioritize sidewalk construction and reconstruction. My administration has been implementing context-driven planning and design throughout state roadway projects that prioritize the safety of vulnerable road users. As written, House Bill 628 is duplicative and

potentially impedes SHA's ability to effectively manage and prioritize the safety of other asset classes.

Public safety remains our administration's top priority, but House Bill 1116 is not needed to continue this focus. House Bill 1116 is merely technical and renames the State Clearinghouse for Missing Children, operated by the Maryland State Police (MSP). It changes nothing with regard to the duties and responsibilities related to the Clearinghouse. It does add a new requirement to study to determine whether MSP is able report information about missing persons to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System. I will direct MSP to assess its capacity in reporting on missing persons in Maryland to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System without the legislation or name change. My administration looks forward to partnering with the General Assembly to prioritize public safety.

As we face unprecedented challenges with the budget and unpredictable federal front, we must focus and direct agencies' efforts and resources towards our immediate and urgent needs.

For these reasons, I have vetoed Senate Bill 168, House Bill 628, and House Bill 1116.

Sincerely,

Wes Moore
Governor