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Suite 102  
College Park, MD 20740

**Committee: Environment & Transportation**

**Testimony on: HB 1492 - "Bus Lane Monitoring Cameras - Authorization"**

**Position: Support**

**Hearing Date: March 6, 2020**

The Maryland Sierra Club supports HB 1492. The bill provides that only Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) buses, school buses, bicycles, and emergency vehicles may use traffic lanes designated for use by MTA buses. The bill would allow local jurisdictions to use bus lane monitoring cameras to enforce the prohibition on other vehicles using these lanes. The bill also includes provisions relating to how citations resulting from a monitoring camera would be handled.

Bus lane monitoring cameras are needed to allow dedicated bus lanes to work as intended. Buses traveling in dedicated lanes carry upward of four times more travelers per hour than a general traffic lane. Dedicated bus lanes also double or triple bus speeds by avoiding congestion caused largely by single-occupancy and ride-hailing vehicles. The biggest challenge to having dedicated bus lanes work as intended is finding effective enforcement mechanisms to keep unauthorized users out of those lanes.

Dedicated bus lanes encourage greater use of transit, which reduces environmental damage. Transportation is the largest source of climate-disrupting greenhouse gases in Maryland today, so reducing the number of single-occupancy gas and diesel-fueled vehicles on the roads, and increasing the use of mass transit, is critical. Tailpipe emissions from vehicles also are hazardous to human health, and are linked to cancers, heart disease, asthma, emphysema, and other respiratory diseases.

In summary, this proposal would enable dedicated bus lanes in our state to work as intended, which would allow buses to be faster and attract more ridership. This would benefit bus riders, the businesses that rely on employees who use transit, and our environment. We urge a favorable report on this bill.

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Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has approximately 800,000 members.