



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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SB 199

DATE: February 4, 2020

SPONSOR: Senator Lee

ASSIGNED TO: Judicial Proceedings

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POSITION: SUPPORT (Montgomery County Department of Police)

Vehicle Laws – Overtaking and Passing Bicycles

Senate Bill 199 would allow a driver in a no-passing zone to drive on the left side of the roadway to legally overtake and pass a bicyclist traveling in the same direction while yielding to the right-of-way of the bicyclist and oncoming traffic. A violation of the bill's provisions would be a misdemeanor subject to a \$500 fine. Montgomery County Department of Police supports this measure.

With more than 1,000 miles of trails, paths, and separated bike lanes, Montgomery County is committed to making bicycling convenient, safe, and popular for residents across the region. To advance this effort, however, will require a sensible change in the State's vehicle laws. Many of the more scenic routes across Maryland involve cycling on winding two-lane roads. Under current law, vehicles are prohibited from passing in these areas. What often happens, however, is a bicyclist is given a wide berth by a passing vehicle that takes the vehicle into an oncoming traffic lane in order to safely pass the bicyclist. While vehicles and bicyclists are generally able to manage this maneuver without a collision, it is without question dangerous and illegal and could benefit under the provisions of SB 199.

Senate Bill 199 aligns with Montgomery County's Vision Zero action plan focused on adopting road safety strategies that will make a difference in the lives of drivers, passengers, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Montgomery County Department of Police supports SB 199 for its positive effect on improved vehicle and bicycle safety and urges the Committee to adopt a favorable report.