

FAVORABLE: HB 389 – State Highways – Sidewalk and Bicycle Paths – Maintenance and Repair

February 26th 2024

Chair Barnes and Committee Members,

My name is Steven Hartig, and I am a resident of Riverdale Park, MD. **I support HB 389, repealing the requirement that a political subdivision maintain and repair sidewalks and bicycle pathways constructed, in accordance with Maryland statutes, along Maryland state highways.**

I concur with testimony from the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) in that HB 389 will remove an impediment to implementation of state roadway-safety policy by creating state-road maintenance flexibility. This is a simple bill. It strikes two sentences from the State Code's Transportation Article which currently unnecessarily involves local municipalities in what should be a data and policy-driven decision.

SHA has committed to a Complete Streets policy over a decade ago and the General Assembly passed MD's Vision Zero law in 2019. for change. The General Assembly passed Maryland's Vision Zero law in 2019. Maryland experienced 574 road deaths the next year, in 2020, including 129 pedestrians killed and 15 bicyclists. We experienced 601 road fatalities last year, in 2023, including 155 pedestrians and, again, 15 bicyclists. Maryland is not meeting our state's Vision Zero commitment. We have made no progress.

HB 389 will remove an impediment to implementation of state roadway-safety policy by creating state-road maintenance flexibility. This bill will not impose a new tax for fee on MD residents and businesses. It will not disrupt existing maintenance agreements between SHA and local governments, nor will it affect the State Highway Administration's ability to negotiate similar agreements going forward.

IF the General Assembly enacts HB 389 and cross-filed SB 514, Prince George's County, my county, will expect sidewalk and bikeway creation progress. Three such examples would be the Baltimore & Annapolis Trail extension on MD 704, the Rhode Island Avenue Trolley Trail extension along US 1 from Hyattsville to the DC boarder, and the Greenbelt East Trail on MD 193 to NASA Goddard.

Enacting SB 514/HB 389 will advance Maryland toward meeting our Vision Zero commitment. Last year, Transportation Secretary Paul Wiedefeld pledged "unwavering dedication" – to eliminating all traffic fatalities and severe injuries on Maryland roadways by 2030.

I urge a Favorable HB 389 committee report and General Assembly enactment.

Thank-you!

Steven Hartig

Resident – Riverdale Park, MD

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