



HB 420:
State and Local Parks - Play Area Accessibility - Communication Boards
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Terps For Bike Lanes – FAVORABLE

February 12, 2024

Chair Korman and Committee Members,

I am writing to express Terps for Bike Lanes' strong support for HB0420, which seeks to require the Department of Natural Resources and local governing bodies to construct communication boards in certain newly constructed public play areas. As an organization dedicated to enhancing bicycle infrastructure and fostering inclusivity in our community, we believe that this legislation aligns perfectly with our core values of sustainability, accessibility, and equity.

Our advocacy efforts extend beyond just bike lanes; we are committed to creating a more inclusive environment for all individuals, including those with limited language skills. By defining "communication board" as a device that displays photos, symbols, or illustrations to enable individuals with limited language skills to communicate, this bill promotes accessibility and ensures that public play areas are inclusive for everyone.

Research, such as the systematic review conducted by McAllister et al. (2019) and published in *Augmentative and Alternative Communication*, has consistently shown the effectiveness of communication boards in enhancing communication and social interaction for individuals with developmental disabilities. The findings underscore the importance of implementing measures to support communication and inclusion in public spaces, aligning perfectly with the goals of HB0420.

Terps for Bike Lanes fully supports HB0420 and its provisions to enhance accessibility and inclusivity in public play areas. We believe that investing in communication boards will not only benefit individuals with communication difficulties but also create a more welcoming and inclusive environment for everyone in our community.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Marks

President, Terps for Bike Lanes

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