

HB 135: Transportation - Maryland Transportation Authority - Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety and
Accessibility

House Environment and Transportation Committee

Brendan Wray - FAVORABLE

February 22, 2024

Chair Korman and Committee Members,

I support HB 135, which would establish a “routine accommodation” policy for safe, separated pedestrian and bicycle facilities on bridges and across controlled-access highways. It would, in effect, extend “complete streets” provisions to the Maryland Transportation Administration (MDTA), the one Maryland transportation entity not covered by 2018 legislation that required the Maryland Transportation Authority and MDOT modal administrations to adopt a complete streets policy that requires the implementation of certain complete streets design features.

The MDTA exemption has led to the omission of separated bicycle and pedestrian facilities from the Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge, despite a previous governor’s announcement that the bridge would include them. The MDTA similarly failed to deliver continuous bikeways, as had been promised, along the entirety of MD 200, the Intercounty Connector.

These omissions—the result of an unjustified exemption—limit Marylanders’ and visitors’ green transportation and recreation options. The current MDTA policies endanger bicyclists and pedestrians who seek to use or cross MDTA facilities, contrary to the state’s Vision Zero commitment. Further omissions may additionally cost us federal transportation funding and will certainly limit mobility options for new or reconstructed facilities such as the I-495 Potomac crossing, a new Chesapeake Bay Bridge, and a new Susquehanna River crossing.

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities, if designed into projects, add modest additional cost relative to road-building for cars, which is justified by mobility, tourism, and economic benefits. The cost of these facilities is an insufficient reason for concern about this bill. I urge a Favorable HB 135 committee report and House floor vote.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation.

Brendan Wray
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