



# Montgomery County

## Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550

ANNAPOLIS: 240-777-8270

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**HB 601**

**DATE: February 15, 2024**

**SPONSOR: Delegate Lehman, et al.**

**ASSIGNED TO: Environment and Transportation**

**CONTACT PERSON: Sara Morningstar (Sara.Morningstar@montgomerycountymd.gov)**

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

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### **Street Racing and Exhibition Driving – Prohibited Acts, Enforcement, and Penalties**

House Bill 601 addresses the Statewide public safety issue of street racing and car meet-ups that have become increasingly prevalent around the State. Specifically, the bill: (1) defines “exhibition driving”; (2) prohibits exhibition driving on any highway or private property used by the public for driving; (3) establishes affirmative defenses to a charge of exhibition driving; (4) strengthens penalties imposed for participating and engaging in street racing and exhibition driving; and (5) creates a specific carve-out for an annual event held in Ocean City. Montgomery County supports this bill.

The Montgomery County Department of Police (MCPD) reports that street racing and car meet-ups are a significant public safety issue. Through press releases and social media, MCPD has been working to proactively discourage this reckless driver behavior and has focused resources on dispersing them when they do occur. However, the increasing number of incidents, and the crowd sizes that they tend to generate, have at times overwhelmed traffic enforcement efforts that have resulted in shut-downs of major intersections and have created dangerous conditions for surrounding motorists and pedestrians.

House Bill 601 would enhance public safety by sending a strong message to all participants that street racing and exhibition driving is strictly prohibited in Maryland, and that those engaged in it will be penalized. Montgomery County supports this legislation and urges the Committee to adopt a favorable report.