



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

TRANSIT SERVICES DIVISION

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

Roman Steichen, Director

SB 943 – Vehicle Laws - Bus Obstruction Monitoring Systems (Better Bus Service Act of 2024)

DATE: April 2, 2024
COMMITTEE: House Environment and Transportation Committee
POSITION: Favorable
FROM: The Office of Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

As the Deputy Director of Transit Services of Frederick County, I urge the committee to give SB 943 – Vehicle Laws – Bus Obstruction Monitoring Systems (Better Bus Service Act of 2024) a favorable report.

Transit agencies statewide are aware that boarding or alighting into the street presents significant accessibility considerations; prohibiting the deployment of a ramp, creating a significant step up or down between bus, street, and curb, and more issues that create slip, trip, and fall hazards. These hazards are especially significant for our older adults and people with disabilities who rely on public transportation. When the bus is unable to pull up to the curb and board or alight a passenger safely due to the presence of a vehicle blocking the bus stop or bus lane, it is not only an inconvenience. It can easily and quickly become a safety hazard, which is easily mitigated through effective enforcement, including the type noted in SB 943.

Transit Services has been working diligently with municipalities throughout Frederick County to ensure safe, accessible paths of travel to and from bus stops, as well as accessible locations to board. Through targeted efforts to connect the curb line to the sidewalk, Transit Services is allowing a sturdy, paved location to lower the ramp onto, to kneel the bus down adjacent to, or to step on and off the bus. However, these efforts are immediately canceled out when a vehicle is parked at the bus stop, and the bus is forced to pick up or drop off passengers in an unsuitable location. These built environment modifications come at a great expense; one that is rendered ineffective the moment a personal vehicle parks in a bus stop and remains there.

The ability to enforce no stopping or parking in bus stops through the use of technology is also beneficial to our law enforcement, who are often tasked with ticketing but are short-staffed or focusing their essential efforts on other significant duties. SB 943 would assist local jurisdictions with bus obstruction monitoring and allow staff to have a greater capacity by automating this system.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 943. I urge you to advance this bill with a favorable report.

Jaime McKay

Deputy Director, Transit Services

