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Prince George's County

Finance Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of SB 514 - Sidewalk and Path Maintenance

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeyer and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Today, I am presenting SB514 – Sidewalk and Path Maintenance because whenever you take a walk throughout our beautiful state, or if you pay attention while driving, you will notice that our sidewalks are in disrepair. Tree roots cutting through them, blocks that are clearly worn out, dirt pathways in place of adequate infrastructure, and so much more, the problem becomes more apparent at each glance. The reason for this is an administrative limbo, where the state claims a road but not its sidewalks, and the cities that legally administer them refuse to maintain them due to budget concerns, a lack of will, or a belief that it is the state's duty. The results of this are simple and apparent: a dysfunctional system for pedestrians.

This is without even mentioning the accessibility issues that it creates, as those who are unable to drive due to disability must then face tripping hazard after tripping hazard and face the reality that our state and local jurisdictions are not doing enough for them. Furthermore, those who wish to not drive a car are, in many cases, forced to do so due to the danger that our sidewalks pose.

This bill is the first step to amend that, by creating a clear pathway for maintenance and repair of sidewalks and paths next to our state roads. By transferring the ownership to the state, we can ensure that hundreds of miles of sidewalks central to our communities and the mobilization of people are finally taken care of. This ownership change will give complete responsibility for the road and surrounding areas to the state government and create a clear and more comprehensive direction for maintenance.

Our neighborhoods can also not tolerate this. Nobody wants to live in a place that seems forgotten by their government, as we are actively sending the wrong message to our constituents. Our streets are where our social lives, sense of community, and transportation begin, and we cannot let that be where our support ends. I hope that every Maryland street can be as beautiful as the last, and not allow places that are so important to every single one of us to feel like they have fallen behind.

No longer can this state accept a state of abandonment for any facet of its infrastructure, nor can we allow an administrative dispute to affect the quality of our work this much. Henceforth, I hope

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that we can adequately support our disabled residents, our neighborhoods, and the needs of our state by passing this bill.

For this reason, I respectfully request a favorable committee report on SB 514.