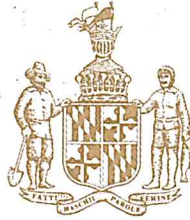


2024JacksonTestimonySB464.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Jackson

Position: FAV

MICHAEL A. JACKSON
Legislative District 27
Calvert, Charles and
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Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Chair, Pensions

Public Safety, Transportation, and
Environment

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

District Office
250 Merrimac Court
Prince Frederick, Maryland 20678

TESTIMONY - SENATE BILL 464

URBAN STATE HIGHWAYS – SPEED LIMITS – EXCEPTIONS

JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 15, 2024

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Committee Members:

Senate Bill 464 is a very straightforward bill that simply authorizes the Maryland State Highway Administration to reduce the speed limit on an Urban Highway by up to 5 miles per hour without a traffic or engineering study.

This piece of legislation is a part of the State Highway Administration's Vision Zero initiative which holds the noble aim of eliminating pedestrian and traffic fatalities. Presently, traffic studies are required to reduce speed limits and it often takes quite some time and that time could be a matter of life and death in certain circumstances where highway uses (and particularly speed limits) no longer correspond with the amount of vehicle and pedestrian traffic that they handle.

It's common knowledge that vehicle speed is directly related to crash severity and this bill just aims to give MDOT another tool in their toolbox to help save lives on our highways.

For the reasons listed above, I ask for a favorable report of Senate Bill 464.

MD SB 464 Support Letter.pdf

Uploaded by: Omar Masood

Position: FAV



ADVOCATES
FOR HIGHWAY
& AUTO SAFETY

February 14, 2024

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
The Honorable Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Maryland General Assembly
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Smith and Vice Chair Waldstreicher:

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates), an alliance of consumer, safety, medical, public health and law enforcement groups and insurance companies working together to pass highway and auto safety laws that prevent crashes, save lives, reduce injuries, and contain costs, supports enactment of Senate Bill (SB) 464. This legislation will improve safety by permitting the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) to decrease speed limits by five miles per hour (mph) on urban state highways without an engineering or traffic investigation. SB 464 is critical and timely.

Speed is a major contributor to crashes in Maryland. In 2021, of the 561 traffic fatalities in the state, 30 percent (168) were speeding related.ⁱ Moreover, urban areas in Maryland are particularly at risk as 91 percent of the state's traffic fatalities occurred in urban areas.ⁱⁱ In addition to being tragic, the unnecessary deaths resulting from speeding are costly. Maryland incurred \$5.9 billion in economic harm, which is equivalent to \$956 per resident, due to motor vehicle crashes according to a 2019 analysis.ⁱⁱⁱ

Vulnerable road users (VRU) are particularly impacted by small changes in speed. The average risk of death for a pedestrian is 10 percent at an impact speed of 23 mph, 25 percent at 32 mph, and 50 percent at 42 mph.^{iv} Lowering speed limits will save lives. A 2022 study of speed limit reductions in Seattle, WA, found a five-mph decrease in the speed limit was associated with a 17 percent reduction in downtown crashes involving a police-reported injury.^v Similarly, on high-capacity urban roads that are not expressways, Seattle experienced a 20 percent decline in crashes resulting in a police-reported injury.^{vi}

The efficacy of lower speeds is also demonstrated by outcomes of converse scenarios when speed limits are increased. A study found that from 1993-2017, a five-mph increase in state speed limits led to 37,000 more traffic deaths.^{vii}

Advancing this legislation will increase safety and decrease crash risk while curbing related costs in Maryland. We urge you to advance SB 464.

Sincerely,

Catherine Chase, President

-
- i State Traffic Safety Information for Maryland (2021), NHTSA, available at <https://cdan.dot.gov/stsi.htm>.
- ii *Ibid.*
- iii The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2019, NHTSA, Feb. 2023, DOT HS 813 403, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813403>.
- iv Impact Speed and a Pedestrian's Risk of Severe Injury or Death, AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, Sep. 2011., available at <https://aaaafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/2011PedestrianRiskVsSpeedReport.pdf>.
- v Effects of Lowering Speed Limits On Crash Severity in Seattle, Mar. 2023, IIHS, available at <https://www.iihs.org/api/datastoredocument/bibliography/2279>.
- vi *Ibid.*
- vii Farmer, Charles M., The effects of higher speed limits on traffic fatalities in the United States, 1993–2017, IIHS, April 2019; available at <https://www.iihs.org/api/datastoredocument/bibliography/2188>.

SB0464 - TSO - Speed Limits on Urban Highways_SUPP

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: FAV

February 14, 2024

The Honorable William C. Smith Jr.
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

***RE: Letter of Support – Senate Bill 464 – Urban State Highways - Speed Limits -
Exceptions***

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports Senate Bill 464 as it provides another context-driven tool that can be used to improve safety and reduce road incidents on urban highways.

Senate Bill 464 enables the State Highway Administration (SHA) to reduce the speed limit on an urban highway by five miles per hour without performing a traffic or engineering study. An urban highway is defined as a roadway within a municipality (not including expressways) which features curb, gutter, and closed drainage, and is located within a U.S. Census defined urban area where significant pedestrian traffic is observed.

Increasingly, the State is responding to numerous requests for speed limit reduction on State highways where posted speed limits no longer correspond to roadway context. In 2019, Maryland adopted Vision Zero and SHA published the *Context Driven: Access and Mobility for All Users Guide* to establish a framework for understanding the relationship between access and mobility and to address serious injuries and deaths on our roadways. Since then, speed limit reductions on State roads have been one of the top three most requested engineering safety countermeasures implemented by SHA, with more than 40 corridors studied and evaluated at the request of local jurisdictions or following a serious injury or fatality. Senate Bill 464 provides SHA with a way to respond in a more agile manner to areas where speed is a contributor to roadway incidents. This ability, in conjunction with tools such as the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan and the Context Guide for engineering, allows SHA to plan, design, and engineer roadways that are responsive to the environment around them.

This legislation is a critical tool that can be used to accelerate efforts towards achieving zero traffic deaths and serious injuries in Maryland, specifically where known issues exist. Data shows that in Maryland and nationwide, more frequent crashes occur on State and locally owned roads in urban areas where density is higher, and more severe crashes occur on State-owned roads where speeds are generally higher. Recent National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) findings have shown Maryland is on track with the nationwide average where speeding, exceeding the posted speed limits, or traveling too fast for conditions was a contributing factor in almost 29 percent of all traffic fatalities.

The Honorable William C. Smith Jr.
Page Two

Senate Bill 464 also aligns with recommendations in the Federal Highway Administration's *Safe System Approach for Speed Management* report which found that small changes result in improved outcomes for roadway users. Other states like Washington and Florida have adopted similar strategies for speed management where incremental speed limit reductions by five miles per hour are implemented to achieve target speeds and increase compliance over time. These results are increased exponentially when complimentary tools in engineering, education, and enforcement are used to achieve target operational speeds. The Context Driven toolkit is an integral part of designing safe streets in Maryland and Senate Bill 464 adds a proven speed management technique that supports Maryland's commitment to Vision Zero.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee grant Senate Bill 464 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Kandese Holford
Director, Active Transportation & Micromobility
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1273

Pilar Helm
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090

SB 464_MAA_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel Clark

Position: FAV

CHAIRMAN:
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David Slaughter

MARYLAND ASPHALT ASSOCIATION



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Paul Bramble
SECRETARY:
Curtis Hall
PRESIDENT:
Tim Smith

February 15, 2024

Senator Will Smith, Chair
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 464 – FAVORABLE – Urban State Highways – Speed Limits – Exceptions

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Asphalt Association (MAA) is comprised of 19 producer members representing more than 48 production facilities, 25 contractor members, 25 consulting engineer firms and 41 other associate members. MAA works proactively with regulatory agencies to represent the interests of the asphalt industry both in the writing and interpretation of state and federal regulations that may affect our members. We also advocate for adequate state and federal funding for Maryland's multimodal transportation system.

Senate Bill 464 grants the State Highway Administration the authority to reduce the maximum speed limit by 5 miles per hour on certain urban State highways without the need for an engineering and traffic investigation.

MAA supports this legislation because it will take necessary action in improving road safety. The ability of the State Highway Administration to adjust speed limits based on current conditions without the bureaucratic hurdles of a full investigation will provide the necessary flexibility to address road safety concerns promptly. SB 464 will be an important step in aligning with the Maryland Work Zone Safety Group's recommendations, thus contributing to a more secure and efficient transportation network for all Marylanders.

We appreciate you taking the time to consider our request for a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 464.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tim E. Smith, P.E.
President
Maryland Asphalt Association

SB 464_MTBMA_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel Clark

Position: FAV



February 15, 2024

Senator Will Smith, Chair
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 464 – FAVORABLE – Urban State Highways – Speed Limits – Exceptions

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Transportation Builders and Materials Association (“MTBMA”) has been and continues to serve as the voice for Maryland’s construction transportation industry since 1932. Our association is comprised of 200 members. MTBMA encourages, develops, and protects the prestige of the transportation construction and materials industry in Maryland by establishing and maintaining respected relationships with federal, state, and local public officials. We proactively work with regulatory agencies and governing bodies to represent the interests of the transportation industry and advocate for adequate state and federal funding for Maryland’s multimodal transportation system.

Senate Bill 464 grants the State Highway Administration the authority to reduce the maximum speed limit by 5 miles per hour on certain urban State highways without the need for an engineering and traffic investigation.

MTBMA supports this legislation because it will take necessary action to improve road safety. The ability of the State Highway Administration to adjust speed limits based on current conditions without the bureaucratic hurdles of a full investigation will provide the necessary flexibility to address road safety concerns promptly. SB 464 will be an important step in aligning with the Maryland Work Zone Safety Group’s recommendations, thus contributing to a more secure and efficient transportation network for all Marylanders.

We appreciate you taking the time to consider our request for a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 464.

Thank you,

Michael Sakata
President and CEO
Maryland Transportation Builders and Materials Association