



SB 593: Transportation - Maryland Transportation Authority - Pedestrian and
Bicycle Safety and Accessibility
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Washington Area Bicyclist Association – FAVORABLE

February 22, 2024

Chair Smith and Committee Members,

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) is an advocacy organization with 1,200 Maryland members, founded in 1972. We fight for a just and sustainable transportation system where walking, biking, and transit are the best ways to get around.

WABA supports SB 593, 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, which is justified by mobility, tourism, and economic benefits. The cost of these facilities is an insufficient reason for concern about this bill.

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association urges a Favorable SB 593 committee report and Senate floor vote.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation.

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