

February 21, 2024

Hon. Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
Judicial Proceedings Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Position: **Support** SB 514 - State Highways – Sidewalks and Bicycle Pathways – Maintenance & Repair

Dear Chair Smith and members of the committee:

Please accept these comments on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth, the leading non-profit organization in the D.C. region, including suburban Maryland, advocating for walkable, bikeable, inclusive, transit-oriented communities as the most sustainable and equitable way for the DC region to grow and provide opportunities for all.

We wish to express our support for SB 514. This bill would remove the requirement that a sidewalk constructed on a state highway right of way be maintained and repaired by the local political subdivision. This requirement has been an impediment to the construction of needed sidewalks. By removing the rigid assignment of maintenance and repairs costs to the local government, a partnership between the state and local authorities can work out how to best maintain the sidewalk along a state road. The responsibility for maintaining and repairing could be assigned differently, depending on the circumstances. This bill provides the flexibility needed for the state and local governments to work out how to provide necessary facilities, and how to maintain them on a case by case basis.

State highways in urban areas have many segments with missing sidewalks, and correspondingly many segments of high injury roadways for vulnerable users. This simple bill allows a more flexible and tailored approach for the safety and needs of road users.

We ask that the committee provide a favorable recommendation. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Cort
Policy Director