

March 5, 2024

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

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

Dear Chair and committee members,

Please accept this testimony in support of SB 943 on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth (CSG). CSG is the leading organization advocating for walkable, bikeable, inclusive, transit-oriented communities as the most sustainable and equitable way for the Washington, DC region to grow and provide opportunities for all. We work extensively in suburban Maryland, focused on Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.

We are excited about plans for tactical bus lanes on Georgia Avenue in Montgomery County, and Silver Hill Road in Prince George's County. These projects are collaborations between the State Highway Administration, WMATA, and each county's Department of Transportation. They reflect a shared commitment to providing better transit service to those who depend on it, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transportation by attracting new riders.

However, without the ability to deter violations, and enforce prohibitions against stopping or parking in dedicated bus lanes, jurisdictions like Montgomery and Prince George's will not be able to realize the full value of these investments—and riders will not experience the full value of these measures.

Prohibiting unallowed stopping and parking in dedicated bus lanes, and enabling local jurisdictions to enforce this prohibition, including with fixed or onboard cameras, will make bus service faster and more reliable for riders and allow jurisdictions to maximize the benefits of their investments in better service. This advances a more racially and economically equitable transportation system as the majority of bus riders are low income, and the great majority of bus riders are people of color.

For these reasons, we ask for a favorable report for SB 943. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Cort
Policy Director