

Mr. Chairman, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Dan Katz, and I am Vice President of Public Policy for Hayden AI. We work with transit agencies, including WMATA, to help combat obstructions that undermine safe and reliable public transit.

We strongly support SB 943 because it would enable transit buses operating in Maryland to utilize technology currently authorized not only in DC, but also New York, California, Chicago and Philadelphia.

In addition to bus lanes, enforcement of illegal parking in bus stops is critical to reduce hazards especially for people with disabilities and seniors. For example, blocked bus stops make boarding dangerous and sometimes impossible for wheelchair users because bus operators are unable to properly deploy wheelchair access ramps if the bus cannot pull up to the curb.

For a disabled person, a blocked bus stop can mean the difference between reaching their destination on time or late – or not reaching it at all.

That's why WMATA and other agencies across the country are using this tool for bus stops, bus lanes, bike lanes, double parking and other violations that undermine transit.

This technology does work and does change behavior. In New York, on some of the most congested bus routes in the city, this technology has helped improve bus speeds by up to 36 percent. And collisions involving buses have gone down dramatically, in some cases by as much as 34 percent.

SB 943 also includes strong privacy protections. It requires that the technology is focused on vehicles – not people. To protect privacy, this bill requires all video evidence to be destroyed when not relevant to an offense or active citation.

Those are some of the safety, accessibility, and performance improvements that SB 943 can bring to Maryland.

Thank you.