

SB943_CharlieScott_fav.pdf

Uploaded by: Charlie Scott

Position: FAV



WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Public Testimony in Support of SB943

Vehicle Laws – Bus Obstruction Monitoring Systems (Better Bus Service Act of 2024)

Before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 6, 2024

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today. For the record, my name is Charlie Scott and I am the Senior Government Relations Officer for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). I am here to urge your strong support for Senate Bill 943.

At Metro, we have just launched a program, in partnership with the District of Columbia, to begin automated enforcement of bus lane and bus stop parking violations. A portion of our bus fleet is now equipped with cameras to detect and record vehicles that are blocking bus lanes or bus stops. Any warnings or tickets are issued by the District of Columbia. The bus stop enforcement began in late 2023 and ticketing of vehicles in dedicated bus lanes started earlier this year.

Our focus, of course, is on improving the experience for our bus customers and we know that on-time performance is one of the key factors in improving customer satisfaction. The ability for our buses to access bus stops and make full use of dedicated bus lanes will improve reliability, making bus service more attractive to new customers.

Across the region, our jurisdictions have made investments to ensure that bus stops are ADA-accessible, so enabling enforcement of parking restrictions at bus stops will have direct benefits for customers with specific mobility needs.

In the District of Columbia, the Clear Lanes program includes enforcement at over 3,000 bus stops on Metrobus routes throughout the city. By including enforcement of bus stops, and not just bus lanes, the District is ensuring that residents of every ward realize the benefits that automated enforcement can provide.

The bus lane monitoring program applies to 12.7 miles of dedicated bus lanes in the District, covering a fraction of the route mileage covered by the bus stop monitoring.

For Maryland, I strongly encourage the General Assembly to enable this form of enforcement for both bus stops and bus lanes.

Even with just the 12.7 miles of dedicated bus lanes in the District of Columbia, that is still more than we have in Prince George's and Montgomery County. Dedicated bus lanes along an approximately two-mile segment of University Boulevard near Wheaton opened recently and our staff has worked in coordination with MDOT SHA on plans to implement targeted areas of dedicated bus lanes on Silver Hill Road in Suitland and Georgia Avenue in Silver Spring. While enabling this type of bus monitoring enforcement on dedicated bus lanes in these counties would benefit a segment of our riders, enabling enforcement at bus stops would yield widespread benefits to all riders, and particularly those with mobility needs.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to provide a favorable report to SB943, and thank Senator Kelly for her sponsorship of this important legislation.

CSG Testimony on SB 943 Better Bus Service Act of

Uploaded by: Cheryl Cort

Position: FAV

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

Senate Hayden AI MD Testimony 2024.pdf

Uploaded by: Dan Katz

Position: FAV

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.

Comments on SB943, the Better Bus Service Act.pdf

Uploaded by: Dan Reed

Position: FAV



Chair William C. Smith, Jr.
and Members, Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

March 5, 2024

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

My name is Dan Reed and I serve as the Regional Policy Director for [Greater Greater Washington](#), a nonprofit that works to advance racial, economic, and environmental justice in land use, transportation, and housing throughout Greater Washington. **GGWash supports Senate Bill 943, the Better Bus Service Act**, which would allow local jurisdictions to enforce bus lane violations.

Maryland has a growing network of bus lanes, which give thousands of bus riders a faster, more reliable trip each day. However, we only get the full benefit of the public's investment in bus lanes when they're clear and free for buses to move. The Better Bus Service Act would make it illegal for private vehicles to drive, park, or stand in a bus lane. It would also allow local jurisdictions and transit agencies to use bus lane monitoring systems, including traffic cameras, which are shown to be effective at changing driver behavior¹. This bill would also create a Workgroup on Curb Space Management that would provide recommendations on how to manage the many competing uses for the curbside on busy roads, such as bus lanes, bike lanes, parking, deliveries, and pick-ups and drop-offs.

The Better Bus Service Act will ensure that busy Maryland roads work better for everyone, while ensuring that travelers can get where they're going reliably and safely. We ask the Judicial Proceedings Committee to give this bill a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Dan Reed'.

Dan Reed
Regional Policy Director

¹

<https://www.iihs.org/news/detail/speed-cameras-reduce-injury-crashes-in-maryland-county-iihs-study-shows#:~:text=They%20found%20that%20the%20cameras,police%20officer%20on%20the%20scene.>

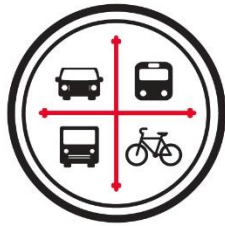
The Washington, DC region is great and it can be greater.

80 M Street SE, Suite 100, Washington, DC 20003
info@ggwash.org

SB 943 Favorable_CMTA.pdf

Uploaded by: Eric Norton

Position: FAV



Transportation Alliance

March 6, 2024

Testimony on SB 943 – *Better Bus Service Act of 2024* – Judicial Proceedings Committee

Position: Favorable

The Central Maryland Transportation Alliance supports SB 943, which expands the ability of local jurisdictions to enforce dedicated bus lanes.

Dedicated bus lanes can be an effective tool to move people more efficiently through our most crowded and economically productive corridors. Public education and enforcement are critical to the effectiveness of dedicated bus lanes. But bus riders regularly report that lanes are blocked by parked or standing cars and trucks.

At the Transportation Alliance we recruited volunteers and conducted observations of Baltimore City bus lanes in fall 2018. During our observations 25% of the time a car or truck was parked in any given block of a bus lane. Buses are forced to merge into general travel lanes, causing delays and disrupting schedules. These disruptions can impact the entire network and on-time performance suffers. MTA's buses, for example, are typically reporting an on-time performance rate of under 75%.

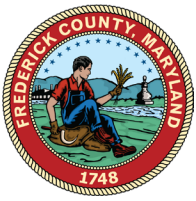
However, better and consistent enforcement should reduce incidents of cars or trucks stopped or standing in bus lanes, lower travel times for bus trips, improve reliability for scheduled bus arrivals, and move more people per hour through our busiest corridors. A study from New York City shows camera enforcement on bus lanes increased bus speeds by up to 34% and increased ridership by up to 20%.

We encourage a FAVORABLE report for Senate Bill 943.

SB 943, FAV, FCG, Transit, LS24.pdf

Uploaded by: Jaime McKay

Position: FAV



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

TRANSIT SERVICES DIVISION

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

Roman Steichen, Director

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

DATE: March 6, 2024
COMMITTEE: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
POSITION: Favorable
FROM: The Office of Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

As the Deputy Director of Transit Services of Frederick County, I urge the committee to give SB 943 – Vehicle Laws – Bus Obstruction Monitoring Systems (Better Bus Service Act of 2024) a favorable report.

Transit agencies statewide are aware that boarding or alighting into the street presents significant accessibility considerations; prohibiting the deployment of a ramp, creating a significant step up or down between bus, street, and curb, and more issues that create slip, trip, and fall hazards. These hazards are especially significant for our older adults and people with disabilities who rely on public transportation. When the bus is unable to pull up to the curb and board or alight a passenger safely due to the presence of a vehicle blocking the bus stop or bus lane, it is not only an inconvenience. It can easily and quickly become a safety hazard, which is easily mitigated through effective enforcement, including the type noted in SB 943.

Transit Services has been working diligently with municipalities throughout Frederick County to ensure safe, accessible paths of travel to and from bus stops, as well as accessible locations to board. Through targeted efforts to connect the curb line to the sidewalk, Transit Services is allowing a sturdy, paved location to lower the ramp onto, to kneel the bus down adjacent to, or to step on and off the bus. However, these efforts are immediately canceled out when a vehicle is parked at the bus stop, and the bus is forced to pick up or drop off passengers in an unsuitable location. These built environment modifications come at a great expense; one that is rendered ineffective the moment a personal vehicle parks in a bus stop and remains there.

The ability to enforce no stopping or parking in bus stops through the use of technology is also beneficial to our law enforcement, who are often tasked with ticketing but are short-staffed or focusing their essential efforts on other significant duties. SB 943 would assist local jurisdictions with bus obstruction monitoring and allow staff to have a greater capacity by automating this system.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 943. I urge you to advance this bill with a favorable report.

Jaime McKay, Deputy Director
Transit Services of Frederick County



SB943_MDSierraClub_fav 06March2024.docx (2).pdf

Uploaded by: Josh Tulkin

Position: FAV



P.O. Box 278
Riverdale, MD 20738

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Testimony on: SB 943, Vehicle Laws - Bus Obstruction Monitoring Systems (Better Bus Service Act of 2024)

Position: Support

Hearing Date: March 6, 2024

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports SB 943, which would authorize local jurisdictions to use a bus lane monitoring system to enforce the prohibition against driving a motor vehicle in a designated bus lane.

An authorized bus lane monitoring system would record images of vehicles traveling in a dedicated bus lane where there is a prohibition of unauthorized vehicles using such a lane. The bill specifies the training that monitoring system operators would need to complete, and the information that should be included with the citation which would be mailed to the registered owner of a vehicle caught violating the prohibition. Violators would be subject to a civil penalty that may not exceed \$75. Failure to pay the fine could result in suspension of the motor vehicle registration.

Bus lane monitoring systems are needed to allow dedicated bus lanes to work as intended. Buses traveling in dedicated lanes carry upward of four times more travelers per hour than a general traffic lane. Dedicated lanes allow buses to travel two or three times faster than usual bus speeds by avoiding traffic congestion often caused by single-occupancy vehicles. The biggest challenge to having dedicated bus lanes work as intended is finding effective enforcement mechanisms to keep unauthorized users out of those lanes.

Faster travel in dedicated bus lanes encourages greater use of transit, which is much better for our environment and public health, and can lessen traffic congestion by reducing the number of vehicles on the road. Transportation is the largest source of climate-disrupting greenhouse gases in Maryland today, so getting more people out of their gas and diesel-fueled vehicles and onto mass transit is critically important. Tailpipe emissions from fossil-fuel powered vehicles are also hazardous to human health, and are linked to cancers, heart disease, asthma, emphysema, other respiratory diseases, and premature death.

In summary, this proposal would enable dedicated bus lanes in our state to work as intended, which would allow buses to be faster and attract more ridership. This bill would bring about positive change, and we urge a favorable report on it.

Jane Lyons-Raeder
Chair, Transportation Committee
janelyons@gmail.com

Josh Tulkin
Chapter Director
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.

Written Testimony SB 943 – Better Bus Service Act

Uploaded by: Matthew Girardi

Position: FAV



Statement of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 689

SB 943– Better Bus Service Act of 2024

March 6th, 2024

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Matthew Girardi, Political & Communications Director, ATU Local 689

ATU Local 689 strongly supports SB 943 and urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue a favorable report. This bill is a commonsense measure that would make Maryland roads easier to navigate for operators, trips quicker for the riding public, and streets safer for all.

At Local 689, we represent over 15,000 transit workers and retirees throughout the Washington DC Metro Area performing many skilled transportation crafts for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), MetroAccess, DASH, and DC Streetcar among others. Our union helped turn low-wage, exploitative transit jobs into transit careers. We became an engine for the middle-class of this region.

Local 689 supports HB 107 because, as we have already seen in Washington DC, dedicated bus lanes are good for transit, and ticketing reckless drivers is good for public safety. When lanes are clear, it means that operators are able to navigate through traffic easier, faster, and safer. Likewise, for the riding public, it means that buses are able to come on time more often and get them to their destinations without having to sit in traffic. Thankfully, most people see the logic in this. However, too often, the recklessness of a few individuals illegally obstructing bus lanes has eclipsed the need of the greater riding public. Ultimately, we see this as a matter not only of fairness but also of common sense.

All jurisdictions should have the authority to collect fees on reckless bus lane obstruction as they see fit—including with a bus lane monitoring system akin to that just enacted in Washington DC. Doing so would provide real time incentive for individuals to stay out of dedicated bus lanes and allow for traffic to flow as intended, and a guarantee that drivers would face consequences.

Already, we have seen an uptick in reckless driving over the past few years. Traffic fatalities in Maryland reached 600 in 2023, the highest in nearly two decades. Marylanders deserve better. Keeping bus lanes clear and swiftly penalizing reckless drivers obstructing bus lanes is good for transit workers, the riding public, and our whole transportation network.

We thank Senators Kelly and Lam and for introducing this measure and urge the committee to issue a favorable report.

SB 943 - MoCo_MCDOT_FAV (GA 24).pdf

Uploaded by: Melanie Wenger

Position: FAV



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550

ANNAPOLIS: 240-777-8270

SB 943

DATE: March 6, 2024

SPONSOR: Senators Kelly and Lam

ASSIGNED TO: Judicial Proceedings

CONTACT PERSON: Melanie Wenger (melanie.wenger@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: Support (Department of Transportation)

Vehicle Laws – Bus Obstruction Monitoring Systems (Better Bus Service Act of 2024)

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) strongly supports Senate Bill 943, which would expand to all local jurisdictions in the State the authority currently only granted to Baltimore City to use bus lane monitoring systems. Bus lane monitoring systems are used to capture a recorded image of the driver of a motor vehicle if a violation is being committed. Under Senate Bill 943, a local law enforcement agency or a contractor would be permitted to operate a bus lane monitoring system.

State roads in Montgomery County have the highest Metrobus ridership in Maryland. This month, Montgomery County will open its first bus lane, which will be 2.1 miles long, located along University Boulevard. MCDOT is also planning to install bus lanes along Georgia Avenue in Silver Spring later this year. Bus lanes will also be added as part of the County's new bus rapid transit (BRT) FLASH bus service along the Germantown Transit Center and US 29. With these projects, the County has an immediate need for efficient bus lane enforcement, and therefore Senate Bill 943 will be a useful tool to ensure the effectiveness and safety of bus lanes in Montgomery County and around the State.

Enabling the use of bus lane monitoring systems will help ensure public transit reliability and performance, thus encouraging transit ridership. The County's ability to utilize bus lane monitoring systems under Senate Bill 943 is a critical step to supporting successful implementation of bus lanes in the near term in addition to supporting the County's extensive plans for BRT over the longer term. For these reasons, MCDOT respectfully requests the Committee to vote favorably on the bill.

SB0943 - MTA - Dedicated Bus Lanes_SUPP_FINAL.pdf

Uploaded by: Pilar Helm

Position: FAV

March 6, 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 943 – Vehicle Laws - Bus Lane Obstruction -
Monitoring Systems Expansion and Workgroup (Better Bus Service Act of 2024)***

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports the intent of Senate Bill 943 as it allows for increased efficiencies and enforcement of statewide dedicated bus lanes (DBLs). The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) looks forward to continuing to collaborate with the sponsor on this bill.

Senate Bill 943 authorizes automated bus lane enforcement statewide, through either the use of wayside or onboard cameras. Additionally, it establishes the Workgroup on Curb Space Management, which is charged with analyzing curb space regulations within Baltimore City and providing recommendations.

This legislation builds upon previous legislation which authorized Baltimore City to conduct automated enforcement of driving in DBLs. The MTA and the Baltimore City Department of Transportation (BCDOT) have partnered to plan, design, and install approximately 17 miles of DBLs throughout MTA's Core Bus service area. These lanes minimize traffic delays for buses to increase speed and service reliability, reduce merging and yielding conflicts between buses and other vehicles, and establish a clear path for emergency responders.

Nationwide, data has shown that wayside and on-board automated enforcement has been successful at reducing bus lane incursions and improving transit travel times. Nearly 400 fixed cameras in New York City (NYC) issue over 500,000 per year and 600 onboard cameras in NYC have issued 328,000 citations since October 2019. The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) found nearly 4,000 violations per week during a Spring 2023 pilot on two routes. Additionally, automated enforcement of bus lanes in the San Francisco Bay Area has yielded travel time and on-time performance improvement of up to 20%. Both New York and San Francisco have found that automated enforcement discourages repeat bus lane violators. These successes are leading more cities to implement automated enforcement, with Los Angeles and Washington D.C. beginning programs this year.

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Page Two

MTA is currently partnering with Baltimore City on their plans to implement automated bus lane enforcement. To better understand the state of the market for camera enforcement of DBL violations, MTA conducted a Request for Information (RFI) from bus lane monitoring system vendors in the fall of 2023. MTA can share relevant information from this with Baltimore City and County governments, so that if Senate Bill 943 is to pass and automated enforcement extends statewide, local governments can use this information to inform their enforcement plans.

MDOT would like to note for the Committee that, in instances where equipment would be mounted to or utilize State Highway Administration (SHA) infrastructure or right-of-way, SHA must maintain approval or permitting processes. SHA would seek to recover costs from sponsor agencies for engineering review and permit approvals.

Additionally, MDOT is identified as staffing the Workgroup on Curb Space Management. It is possible that consulting services would be used to provide technical evaluations and other support for the Workgroup.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the Committee consider this information when deliberating Senate Bill 943.

Respectfully submitted,

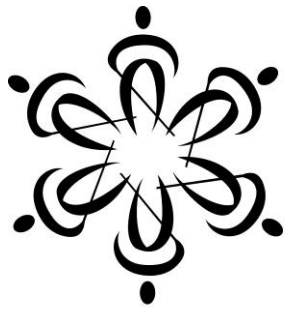
Pilar Helm
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090

Melissa Einhorn
Director of Governmental Affairs
Maryland Transit Administration
410-767-0820

SB943 Better Bus Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Ronza Othman

Position: FAV



NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF THE BLIND
MARYLAND

Live the life you want.

Subject: SB943/HB107 Vehicle Laws – Bus Obstruction Monitoring Systems (Better Bus Service Act of 2024)

From: Members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

To: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Contact: Ronza Othman, President
National Federation of the Blind of Maryland
15 Charles Plaza, #3002
Baltimore, MD 21201
Phone: 443-426-4110
Email: President@nfbmd.org

Date: March 6, 2024

Members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland urge the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to support SB943/HB107. This bill will create a statewide bus monitoring system to keep vehicles from parking, stopping, or otherwise obstructing in bus lanes.

THE PROBLEM

Blind and low vision Marylanders rely on public transportation to get to work, medical appointments, worship services, and other places. The public transportation system in Maryland is riddled with problems, including inconsistent and late fixed route bus service. The impact of these challenges on riders is significant — from losing their jobs to missing dialysis and other critical medical appointments to missing religious services, and more. This problem is exacerbated by drivers who stop, drive, and park in bus lanes, which effectively slow down buses and block access to bus stops for those with disabilities. In addition, many with disabilities can only get on and off buses at a bus stop due to accessibility barriers that exist elsewhere, and those who drive, stop, and park in the bus lane prevent riders with disabilities from being able to access the buses on which those riders depend to move about their communities.

PROPOSED ACTION

The Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee must pass the Better Bus Service Act of 2024, which will implement prohibitions on driving, stopping, and parking in dedicated bus lanes state-wide as well as those who obstruct curb cuts, which those with disabilities also depend on to safely and independently move about their communities. It is particularly important that JPR protect the language in the bill concerning bus stops and curb cuts, as the House failed to do so, rendering their version of the bill no longer a disability support bill.

BACKGROUND

In 2022, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation, specific only to Baltimore City, that prohibited drivers from using dedicated bus lanes and established a bus monitoring system that captured vehicle information for drivers that violated this law. However, the current legislation expands the prohibition state-wide and clarifies which vehicles are covered. The 2022 law was intended to clear Baltimore City's dedicated bus lanes of non-bus traffic in order to make sure buses could travel without obstructions. In addition, the law decreased the number of instances when a non-authorized vehicle blocked a bus stop, resulting in passengers with disabilities being able to get on and off buses safely and accessibly. This bill was intended to deter misuse of bus lanes and improve on-time rates for Baltimore City buses while ensuring accessibility for riders with disabilities.

The problem persists state-wide however, and thus the law needs to be expanded throughout Maryland.

Last year WMATA launched its Clear Lanes program to enforce illegal parking at bus stops with bus-mounted cameras. However, this program operates only in Washington, DC and must be turned off when a MetroBus goes into Maryland. We in Maryland deserve the same safety benefits as our neighbors in DC.

CONCLUSION

To ensure passengers with disabilities throughout Maryland can get on and off buses safely and without obstruction, and to improve on-time performance of the public transportation system, the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee must vote in favor of SB943, the Better Bus Service Act of 2024 and protect bus stops and curb cuts in the bill.

SB0943-JPR_MACo_SUP.pdf

Uploaded by: Sarah Sample

Position: FAV



Senate Bill 943

Vehicle Laws – Bus Obstruction Monitoring Systems (Better Bus Service Act of 2024)

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Judicial Proceedings Committee

Date: March 6, 2024

From: Sarah Sample

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 943. This bill expands, statewide, the authority of a county to install and manage bus lane monitoring systems. It also clarifies acceptable and prohibited activities in designated bus lanes as well as the designated bus stops and curb spaces.

SB 943 is enabling legislation, providing counties with an additional tool in maintaining motor vehicle compliance and safety in neighborhoods and communities. This opportunity also helps counties enhance the reliability and safety of public transportation for residents. With an automated option for enforcing motor vehicle laws and violations, there is great potential to divert costs associated with law enforcement personnel, who would typically be tasked with motor vehicle monitoring. These savings can be reinvested in other areas, while maintaining compliance and safety in neighborhoods via the automated monitoring system.

Counties welcome the additional means to provide the accommodations necessary to maintain safe streets and dependable transportation for all and doing so in a way that is sensitive to the constant demands on taxpayer dollars and county budgets. For these reasons, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report for SB 943.

Senator Kelly SB943 FAV Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Senator Ariana Kelly

Position: FAV



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 6th, 2024

**Testimony in Support of SB943
Vehicle Laws - Bus Obstruction Monitoring Systems (Better Bus Service Act of 2024)**

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, Members of the Committee,

I am before you today to speak about SB943, The Better Bus Service Act of 2024, which is aimed at reducing obstructions to safe, efficient, and accessible bus transit service. The bill will implement provisions into Maryland's statute to improve public transportation and safety for all Marylanders. SB943 prohibits people from stopping, standing, or parking a vehicle in certain areas of the roadway and provides guidelines on how to enforce these rules.

The Better Bus Service Act is enabling legislation that allows transit agencies operating in Maryland to deploy fixed and bus-mounted cameras to enforce parking violations that interfere in transit operations. These violations include illegal parking at bus stops and in bus lanes or operating in a bus-only lane. The cameras will collect and review this footage, which will be reviewed by a parking enforcement officer who can issue a citation by mail. In order to protect privacy, the bill requires that all video evidence is destroyed when no longer relevant to the active citation, and the monitoring system cannot use facial recognition for biometric technology.

Similar jurisdictions have authorized this type of enforcement. In Washington D.C, WMATA uses bus mounted systems to enforce violations for illegal parking in bus lanes, but this enforcement stops at the Maryland Border. New York State passed similar legislation in 2019, and since then, bus time performance and reliability has increased, collisions have gone down on some routes by 34%, and the level of ticketing has been reduced ([New York MTA](#)). Additionally, blocked bus stops present serious hazards for people with disabilities and seniors, as illegal parking makes boarding buses dangerous or impossible.

Lastly, the bill enacts a Workgroup on Curb Space Management with members appointed by the Governor to analyze curb space regulations, provide recommendations on how to effectively manage curb space, examine strategies on obstruction enforcement at bus stops, provide recommendations for a public education campaign, and analyze potential privacy concerns.

People rely on buses to get to work, school, and more and over 100,000 trips are taken each day on the Maryland Transit Administration's bus network. The Better Bus Service Act of 2024 helps ensure that Marylanders get where they are going reliably, in a timely manner, and safely.

Today, you will hear from our sponsor panel, including Dan Katz from Hayden AI who is an industry expert, Charlie Scott with WMATA, Ronza Othman, President of the National Federation of the Blind MD Chapter, and Bob Carlson, disability advocate and formerly of the Community Transportation Association of America.

I thank you for your consideration and urge a favorable report on SB943.

2024-SB943-BetterBusServiceAct-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Seth Grimes

Position: FAV



SB 943: Vehicle Laws - Bus Lane Obstruction - Monitoring Systems Expansion and
Workgroup (Better Bus Service Act of 2024)
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Washington Area Bicyclist Association – FAVORABLE

March 6, 2024

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Committee Members,

Transit is the greenest, most equitable form of transportation for distances that are not walkable or bikeable. We must fully fund transit and do what we can to boost its speed, operating efficiency, and convenience.

SB 943, by prohibiting unallowed stopping and parking in a dedicated bus lane and allowing automated enforcement of bus lane use, stopping, and parking violations, is a step toward better transit. The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA), an advocacy organization with 1,200 Maryland members, supports this bill. Noting WABA's focus, we particularly ask you to retain the provision that "a person may not stop, stand, or park a vehicle in a bike lane," as well as the similar "bus stop zone" prohibitions.

SB 943's provisions would extend to dedicated bus lanes in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties, where WABA is active, and would be similar to bus-lane enforcement provisions recently enacted in the District of Columbia, where we are also active and have observed a need for the type of enforcement that would be allowed by SB 943.

In our jurisdictions and about the state, bicyclists may use dedicated bus lanes, hence WABA's special attention to this bill. We encourage bicyclists to ride in bus lanes when safe, in particular when the speed limit is 25 MPH or less and bus frequency is moderate. A look at curb-space regulations and management and at enforcement strategy and education and privacy concerns is in order, therefore WABA supports SB 943's establishment of a Workgroup on Curb Space Management.

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association urges a Favorable SB 943 committee report and Senate floor vote.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation.

Seth Grimes, WABA Maryland organizer
seth.grimes@waba.org

SB0943 - Better Bus Service Act of 2024 - Letter o

Uploaded by: Talya Kravitz

Position: FAV

BALTIMORE'S TRANSIT FUTURE

March 5, 2024

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Re: Support for Senate Bill 0943 — the Better Bus Service Act of 2024

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) and the Greater Washington Partnership (the Partnership), co-leads of the Baltimore's Transit Future coalition, we are writing to express our support for Senate Bill 0943, which prohibits driving or parking in a designated bus lane, authorizes automated enforcement of bus lanes, and establishes a working group on curb space management.

More than 100,000 trips are taken each day on the Maryland Transit Administration's (MTA) bus network, connecting residents to jobs, healthcare, education, and more.¹ With the redesign of the Baltimore area bus network in 2018, the region added 5.5 miles of dedicated lanes on high volume corridors.² However, bus lanes are not effective if other vehicles drive, park, or stand in the lane. Many metropolitan areas — including Washington, DC³, Philadelphia, and New York — are now using automated bus cameras to allow for consistent enforcement without adding large operating expenses or draining police resources.

When buses are stuck in congestion, it reduces their reliability and increases their operating costs. Research indicates that the inverse is also true, as travel times get faster, bus ridership tends to increase.⁴ With more than 90% of MTA bus riders living in households earning less than \$50,000 per year, and more than 80% identifying as Black or African American, prioritizing the efficient movement of buses advances regional goals for economic inclusion.⁵ Automated bus lane enforcement enhances both resource stewardship and equity. However, in the longer term, we encourage a regular review of the penalty levels for driving in bus lanes, as high fines can have a disproportionately negative effect on low-income drivers and decrease public support for this important policy tool.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB043. Thank you for your consideration and shared commitment to reducing barriers to opportunity by prioritizing strategic investments and policies to create a more competitive transit network.

Sincerely,

Nick Henninger-Ayoub, Director of Policy & Research, Greater Baltimore Committee
Thomas J. Maloney, Vice President, Policy & External Affairs, Greater Washington Partnership

¹ MDOT MTA, [Performance Improvement](#) Dashboard, 2023.

² MDOT MTA, [Infrastructure Improvements Dedicated Bus Lanes](#).

³ DCIST, [D.C. To Start Fining Drivers In Bus-Only Lanes Starting Jan. 29](#), Jan. 24, 2024

⁴ Greater Washington Partnership, [Rethinking the Bus: Five Essential Steps for Improving Mobility](#), 2018.

⁵ Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) [2020-2023 Title VI Implementation Program](#).

BALTIMORE'S TRANSIT FUTURE

About the Baltimore's Transit Future Campaign

The [Greater Baltimore Committee](#) and [Greater Washington Partnership](#) launched the Baltimore's Transit Future campaign to call attention to the urgent business imperative and need for the Greater Baltimore region to create a world-class public transit system that helps create shared economic prosperity and catalyzes inclusive growth. Since June 2022, more than 70 business, civic, and non-profit organizations, including many of the largest employers in the State, have joined the campaign encouraging regional focus on six priorities:

1. Address the transit system's repair backlog and operator shortage.
2. Establish frequent, reliable transit service to regional job centers.
3. Support regional coordination, decision making, and funding.
4. Implement a 10-year rapid transit expansion program.
5. Prioritize regional rail investment.
6. Catalyze equitable development at transit and rail stations.

BALTIMORE'S TRANSIT FUTURE

The time for action is now. The residents and businesses of Maryland's largest city and surrounding suburbs deserve a world-class transit system. These six strategic priorities will set the course for a more equitable transportation system, making the Baltimore region a more attractive place to live, work, play, and build a business.

We Support Baltimore's Transit Future

