

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr Cashenna A Cross. I serve as a municipal leader in Prince Georges County and have spent more than two decades in uniform and public service committed to protecting lives and strengthening communities.

I respectfully submit favorable testimony for Senate Bill 698.

Winter weather presents predictable risks. In municipal government, we prepare for snow response, coordinate road treatment, communicate with residents, and deploy limited resources to keep streets safe. Yet one preventable danger remains entirely within the control of individual drivers the failure to remove accumulated snow and ice from vehicle surfaces before traveling.

When snow and ice dislodge from a moving vehicle, it becomes a projectile. At highway speeds, a sheet of ice can shatter a windshield, cause a driver to swerve, or trigger a chain reaction crash. These are not unavoidable acts of nature. They are preventable hazards.

SB 698 establishes a clear duty to remove snow and ice that poses a threat before operating or towing a vehicle. It appropriately limits enforcement to secondary action, which balances roadway safety with fair policing practices. At the same time, it increases accountability when a violation contributes to property damage, serious bodily injury, or death. That is a reasonable and responsible framework.

In local government, we emphasize shared responsibility. Public works crews clear roads. Law enforcement responds to collisions. Emergency personnel stand ready. But individual drivers must also do their part. This bill reinforces a simple expectation of care for others on the road.

The graduated fine structure is proportionate. It distinguishes between commercial and noncommercial vehicles and recognizes the increased risk posed by larger vehicles. It does not criminalize conduct unnecessarily. It sets a standard of responsibility.

Road safety is not partisan. It is practical. This measure supports families, protects first responders, and reduces preventable harm.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 698.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr Cashenna A Cross