

May 27, 2022

The Honorable Bill Ferguson  
President of the Maryland Senate  
H-107 State House  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Mr. President:

In accordance with Article II, Section 17 of the Maryland Constitution, I have vetoed Senate Bill 612 – *Street Racing, Exhibition Driving, and Noise Abatement – Prohibited Acts, Enforcement, and Penalties*.

Maryland citizens have been dealing with an increase in reckless driving incidents that endanger drivers as well as pedestrians. The emerging popularity of exhibition driving is a seriously concerning trend. I am aware of incidents in Baltimore where one vehicle was spinning in wide circles in the middle of the highway blocking traffic and endangering pedestrians. In another incident, a vehicle blocked traffic on the Bay Bridge while performing vehicle stunts. Each incident mainly involves a single vehicle performing stunts one at a time.

In 2020, the Maryland General Assembly passed into law SB 878 in response to serious complaints from Ocean City, MD about “pop up” car rallies. The law defined and banned Exhibition Driving to include the actions of a single motor vehicle within a Special Events Zone, established penalties including fines and incarceration, and authorized Worcester County to designate an area on a highway under its jurisdiction as a Special Event Zone.

SB 612 in its initial form took the existing law and made it a statewide enforcement tool. Unfortunately, I believe amendments to SB 612 inadvertently changed the definition of Exhibition Driving to require the operation of two or more motor vehicles in a reckless manner at the same time. Changing the definition from a single motor vehicle to two or more motor vehicles inadvertently nullifies the original bill, thereby removing law enforcement’s ability to deter Exhibition Driving.

Unfortunately, the unintended consequences of amendments to SB 612 did not come to light until after the legislative session adjourned. Once the new language in the bill was examined by the local State’s Attorney and public safety officials, it was determined that SB 612 essentially negates the intent of the original bill.

For these reasons, I have vetoed Senate Bill 612.

Sincerely,

Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.  
Governor