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**BILL NO.:** SB 65

**TITLE:** Counties - Construction of Sidewalks and Crosswalks - Safe Alternative Routes to Public Schools

**SPONSOR:** Senator Ellis

**COMMITTEE:** Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**POSITION:** **OPPOSE**

**DATE:** January 22, 2020

Baltimore County **OPPOSES** Senate Bill 65 – Counties - Construction of Sidewalks and Crosswalks - Safe Alternative Routes to Public Schools. This bill imposes an unfunded mandate requiring counties report on and construct alternative walkways for students who are ineligible for public transportation.

The Baltimore County Public School system prioritizes student safety when designating zones ineligible for public transportation. Busy roads near our schools are equipped with speed cameras. In high-traffic areas, Baltimore County Police Department provides crossing guards to ensure our students' safety. Providing those residents ineligible for public transportation with a safe route to school is not simply a factor, but the standard when considering the transportation needs of our students.

Baltimore County supports initiatives to improve student safety, and would welcome a partnership with the State to develop and fund comprehensive programs to enhance protections for the County's students. However, this bill would place significant financial burdens on the County with no assistance from the State. Construction costs alone may exceed the entirety of BCPS's capital funding program, a drastic measure for an issue that is currently being sufficiently addressed by the school system.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests an **UNFAVORABLE** report on SB 65. For more information, please contact Chuck Conner, Chief Legislative Officer, at 443-900-6582.