



Maryland Chapter

7338 Baltimore Avenue, Suite 102
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Committee: Environment and Transportation

Testimony on: HB748 “Transportation - Kim Lamphier Bikeways Network Program”

Position: Support

Hearing Date: February 21, 2020

The Maryland Sierra Club supports HB 748, which would codify the state’s Bikeways Network Program. It further would require the Department of Transportation (DOT) to establish application and eligibility criteria for the state-funded grant program which supports a wide range of bicycle network development activities, including connecting bicycle-friendly trails and roads, and improving last-mile connections to work, school, shopping and transit.

The bill also would require that each year the Governor include in the annual state budget an appropriation of at least \$3,800,000 from the Transportation Trust Fund for the operation of the Program, which is to be renamed the Kim Lamphier Bikeways Network Program. At least \$100,000 of the annual appropriation would be distributed to the Maryland Association of Counties and the Maryland Municipal League to provide technical assistance to counties and municipalities with the drafting and submission of grant proposals.

Grants from the Bikeways Network Program leverage past investments in bicycle facilities, and often complement federal grants and funds allocated by counties and cities to build bicycle network activities that help transform communities across the state.

Studies show improvements in bicycle infrastructure lead more people to get out of their cars and bike to their destinations which, in turn, leads to healthier communities and decreased traffic and congestion on roads and highways. Encouraging greater use of bicycles is increasingly important because transportation is now the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the country. Tailpipe emissions from gasoline and diesel-powered vehicles also are hazardous to human health and are linked to various cancers, heart disease, asthma, emphysema, and other respiratory diseases.

DOT’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan 2019 Update states: “It is important ... that bicycle and pedestrian facilities be viewed as key components of the broader transportation priorities in Maryland. The strategic improvement of bicycle and pedestrian facilities must be fully integrated into the development of the state’s multi-modal network.” Having the annual appropriation to the Bikeways Program, as proposed in this bill, is necessary for DOT to achieve its stated objectives for improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the state.

In summary, the relatively modest annual appropriation for the Kim Lamphier Bikeways Network Program specified in this bill is reasonable and would enable the state’s bike network to be greatly enhanced. This would encourage more people to leave their cars at home and ride bikes instead, which would be great for their health and improve our environment as well. We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on this legislation.

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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 approximately 800,000 members.