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MAJORITY WHIP

Judicial Proceedings Committee

Joint Committee on  
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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

*February 12, 2020*

Senate Finance Committee

**Senate Bill 285 - State Highway Administration - Highway Work Permits -  
Pedestrian Access (Pedestrian Access Act of 2020)**

Senate Bill 285 is a bill for my constituents who have been very frustrated with construction in Downtown Bethesda closing sidewalks without providing adequate temporary alternative routes for pedestrians. This bill simply requires the State Highway Administration (SHA) to maintain pedestrian access when it issues access permits within 2 miles of a transit station. This bill also mandates bike lane access be maintained during lane closures and that temporary walkways comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. The purpose is to ensure the safety of walkers and bikers when sidewalks undergo maintenance.

The Friends of White Flint has some suggested amendments that are worth discussing to limit the distance to one mile from a WMATA or MARC rail or transit station and to make sure bike lane requirements are not intrusive or expensive. Meanwhile, the City of Takoma Park views the legislation as written as “just common sense.”

Pedestrian safety should be a top priority in Maryland. When our roads and sidewalks under construction, pedestrians are made more vulnerable. We should protect pedestrian safety with policy initiatives like this legislation. We believe SB 285 will help ensure the safety of pedestrian traffic, and allow the efficient and successful construction of our infrastructure to continue.

For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable report on SB 285, and are open to discussing the amendments offered by the Friends of White Flint.