



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary

January 19, 2021

The Honorable William J. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Support – Senate Bill 17 – Criminal Law – Life Threatening Injury Involving a Motor Vehicle or Vessel – Criminal Negligence (Wade’s Law)

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources supports Senate Bill 17.

As introduced, SB 17 provides a mechanism by which a person is held accountable for criminally negligent behavior when not under the influence of drugs or alcohol and when that behavior results in life-threatening injury to another. The standard of proof required by this legislation would be below the level of gross negligence, which is often difficult to prove. This bill also does not require proof that the operator was impaired while engaged in criminally negligent behavior, which is currently required by Criminal Law Article § 3-211.

Because the legislation would provide a valuable enforcement tool to address unsafe behavior on the water, the department respectfully requests the committee to grant Senate Bill 17 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

James W. McKitrick
Director, Legislative and Constituent Services

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