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February 19, 2021

The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chairman, Judiciary Committee
House Office Building, Room 101
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: HB 773 Public Safety – Firearms Telematics – Study

Dear Chairman Clippinger:

I am writing to you today in support of HB 773. This bill focuses on the emerging technology of *firearm telematics*, which is the installment of an electronic sensor or similar equipment within a firearm that would permit the tracking of the location of the firearm if it becomes lost or stolen.

The bill directs the Department of State Police to conduct a study of firearm telematics in which it will review the current technology and research, evaluate the feasibility of incorporating telematics in previously manufactured firearms, determine the types of firearms in which telematics may be installed, and examine the current and future availability of the technology for retail sale. The Department will be required to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor on or before July 1, 2022.

While I recognize that depending on the proposed future use of such technology, questions related to Fourth Amendment privacy rights will inevitably arise. However, I believe that the technology and its potential use should be explored as it could play an important role in assisting law enforcement locate stolen and lost firearms and thus save lives.

In short, protection of the public is paramount. It is important to study this new technology to determine whether it can be an effective tool for public safety, and once it is better understood, the legislature can then address the issue related to privacy rights if necessary. I want to thank Delegate Pam Queen for sponsoring this legislation, and I urge the Committee to return a favorable report.

Sincerely,

John J. McCarthy

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State's Attorney for
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