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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**HB 64 – State Highways – Designated Shoulder Areas – Establishment of Use by Transit Buses**

**January 20, 2022**

**Delegate Carol L. Krimm**

HB 64 authorizes the Maryland State Highway Administration in consultation with the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) and the Department of State Police to designate right-of-way shoulder areas and post signage for use during peak congestion hours for state and local commuter buses. As we know commuter buses are caught in the same congestion as the rest of the motoring public during peak travel times. This bill is not a mandate rather it authorizes jurisdictions to implement shoulder use if they deem it necessary.

Maryland commuters are experiencing traffic congestion in pre-pandemic volumes. Transit ridership is down and we need to increase ridership. Bus on Shoulders (BOS) is a program used widely in other states to market commuter buses and increase ridership. To circumvent traffic congestion and improve transit ridership satisfaction during peak commute hours, several states (14 states - California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia, and Washington) permit transit buses to utilize designated shoulder areas.

HB 64 would authorize the State Highway Administration in consultation with the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) and the Department of State Police to designate right-of-way shoulder areas and post signage for use during peak congestion hours for state and local transit buses. Additionally, HB 64 will aid MTA in fulfilling its mission of providing “safe, efficient, and reliable transit service across Maryland.”

It is important for commuter buses to be safe and reliable. BOS offers this two-pronged approach to increase ridership. Bypassing traffic congestion increases the reliability of the bus and allows people to depend that the bus will meet a schedule. People who need to pick up children, be home at a certain time, report to a second job, or meet other demands of their daily life will be able to use the bus with confidence.

Also, but just as important, the more people who ride the commuter bus the fewer commuters are using their vehicles and thus not creating emissions. Less stress for the riders and ultimately better traffic flow helps everyone on the road. HB 64 will give jurisdictions the opportunity to alleviate congestion, increase travelers’ value of time and decrease greenhouse gas emissions.

Maryland is in the fiscal position to significantly improve our transportation future with the passage of the federal stimulus and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. We need to learn from other states that have used this program successfully and implement BOS here in Maryland.

I request a favorable report.

