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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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SB 612
Street Racing and Exhibition Driving – Prohibited Acts and Enforcement

Good Afternoon Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein and Members of Environment and Transportation;

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss SB 612, Street racing and Exhibition Driving. We are seeing this widespread activity known as “Street Racing” on many roadways around the State and also in surrounding states. As you may be aware this weekend was particularly active with this type of event, a police car was destroyed in PG Co and bottles thrown at Police Officers in Baltimore City.

SB612 was amended in Judicial Proceedings:

- clarifying that it must be 2 or more vehicles operating in a reckless manner,
- removing the inclusion of spectators, and
- including a prohibition on modifications to the exhaust systems that exceed sound level limits established by the Administrator under § 22–601 of this subtitle.

It passed the Senate by a vote of 47 to 0.

Most street racing events are planned using social media on apps like “snap chat.” Frequently, law enforcement is lucky enough to follow the communication and have enough officers on duty to protect the general public; other times these events just pop-up and law enforcement is not prepared. Often participants see law enforcement and using social media quickly change locations.

Exhibition driving includes activity like excessive acceleration, skidding and squealing, burning and smoking tires, swerving or swaying of the motor vehicle, loud noise, grinding of gears, backfiring and losing contact with the ground. We have included spectators in the bill, they are part of the problem, acting as timekeepers, flagman, or blocking entrances to highways or parking lots.

You may hear today about major roads in Baltimore City being blocked for this type of exhibition or highways like 270, 495 and 95. If a dozen officers are available to charge

the drivers, hundreds of cars may drive by, while tickets are issued to only a few. The bill allows:

- points on driving records,
- the ability to impound the vehicles,
- jail time up to 60 days, and
- fines not exceeding \$1000.

These are all valuable tools for law enforcement as they try to control this type of activity.

Ocean City pioneered this legislation with the H2O unsanctioned exhibition racing event that occurs in and around Ocean City, Maryland annually. In 2021, Maryland State Police issued over 800 citations and over 600 warnings within the Special Event Zone from 9/23/21 through 9/26/21, they also made 14 DUI arrests, 8 criminal arrests and 3 illegal drug arrests and hundreds of cars were impounded. 2021 was a significant improvement over 2020.

Increasing the fines and giving law enforcement the right to impound has made a significant difference in controlling the exhibition racing. These measures have worked well in Ocean City for the H2O event and will assist with enforcement for all exhibition speed racing across the state

It's time to put an end to this dangerous activity of Street Racing, I respectfully request a favorable report on SB 612.