

2021 / 2022 Director

Ken Eaton

2022 / 2022 County Representatives

Caroline: Jeff Kinnamon

Dorchester: John Knox

Queen Anne's: Marianne Jackson

Talbot: Jimmy Mountzalia



*Dedicated to Freedom of the Road &
Responsible Motorcycle Legislation*

To: The Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chairman and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Ken Eaton, Director, Mid-Shore Chapter

Date: March 1, 2022

Re: HB 1333 - Motor Vehicles - Modified Vehicle Exhaust System - Penalties

Position: **UNFAVORABLE: DOES NOT SUPPORT**

I am a motorcyclist, backyard car enthusiast (shade tree mechanic), a farmer, a registered voter, and a member of ABATE of Maryland, Inc., the largest motorcyclist rights organization in the state of Maryland. I personally own multiple vehicles of all types. At the farm, we have motorcycles, trucks, cars, tractors, trailers, etc. ABATE represents the approximately 114,000 on road motorcycles that are registered in Maryland. We have chapters throughout the state and our members include a diverse cross-section of motorcycle riders in Maryland. We **DO NOT SUPPORT HB1333** as it adds additional penalties to a violation of one of the “tools in our toolbox” to prevent accidents.

The best way to not be involved in an accident is to avoid them. ABATE of Maryland, Inc. is immensely proud of our involvement throughout the years with the Motorcycle Safety Program. Education and training are the primary tools for motorcycle safety. However, one of our last resorts is to make a lot of noise so that we can be seen. Countless riders can tell you how they feel invisible until they must “crack the throttle” to make the exhaust a bit louder. The phrase “Loud Pipes Save Lives” has a lot of meaning to a considerable number of riders on the road today. The sudden, loud noise can mean the difference between making it home and spending the night in the hospital. I have personally witnessed this more times than I care to remember throughout Maryland, and across this country, as a motorcyclist in the past 30+ years as a rider.

In addition, many of us are car/truck/motorcycle performance enthusiasts. We are “gear heads.” We enjoy seeing just how much we can improve the performance beyond what the original factory configuration provides. Many new motorcycle purchases start at twenty thousand dollars and go up. Most people then spend thousands of additional dollars customizing their motorcycles to suit their taste and comfort. We spend countless dollars on aftermarket and manufacturer provided, parts, tuner kits, high performance cams, ported heads, exhausts, and electronic control module updates. We upgrade tires, seats, mufflers, complete exhausts, ECM's, handlebars, foot pegs, headlights, heated gear, etc. All to customize our rides to our taste and to make the riding experience more enjoyable and SAFER. A rider that has tweaked his motorcycle (or car or truck) to fit his individual body and his style is more comfortable, more relaxed, has a better handling vehicle, and an overall more enjoyable experience. I am a member of numerous other motorcycle related organizations and when we get together, our conversations always turn to what we have changed on our motorcycles (and cars/trucks) lately. This is true for Harleys, Hondas, BMWs,

Triumphs, Fords, Chevy's, Dodge, you name it. There are 2 million registered vehicles on the road in Maryland. If you conservatively assume that 20% of the registered vehicles have modified exhausts, this bill could be affecting 400,000 vehicles or more. It is safe to say that at least 50% of motorcycles have modified exhausts. That number alone would represent 57,000 registered vehicles.

All on-road vehicles could be affected by this penalty provision. The stock configuration of vehicles does not produce the optimum performance or configuration for all people. Some people seek performance enhancements for additional power for towing, long distance cruising/riding, comfort, better fuel economy, and some for plain personalization of their vehicle.

The penalties attached to this bill will severely affect the aftermarket parts market and will have a detrimental effect on safety. The Mid-Shore Chapter of ABATE of Maryland, Inc. **DOES NOT SUPPORT** HB 1333 - Motor Vehicles - Modified Vehicle Exhaust System - Penalties. We urge the committee to consider an **UnFavorable** vote.

Thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kenneth B. Eaton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kenneth B. Eaton, Director
Mid-Shore Chapter
ABATE of Maryland, Inc.