



Howard County Council

George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043-4392

Christiana Rigby
Councilmember

District 3

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1333

Motor Vehicles – Modified Vehicle Exhaust System – Penalties

March 10, 2022

Dear Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to the Committee. I am writing to express my **support for HB1333**, legislation introduced by Delegate Lehman which would increase penalties and strengthen the regulations on illegal vehicle exhaust modifications in Maryland.

Exhaust system modifications, often referred to as muffler modifications, occur when the exhaust system of a vehicle is illegally modified to increase the noise emitted from the car. This significantly increases the noise from vehicle exhaust systems, even when cars are driven at lower speeds. This practice of exhaust modifications has been illegal in Maryland for many years, yet the problem has persisted in neighborhoods and streets across the state.

Over the last four years, my office has heard countless complaints from Howard County residents and community associations pertaining to drag racing and extremely loud vehicles coming through neighborhoods. These cars have typically had their exhaust systems modified to increase the noise emitted from the vehicles. This noise pollution causes many residents a great deal of stress and anxiety, especially at night and when accompanied by drag racing and other dangerous driving behaviors.

Currently, the deterrents against these modifications are not strong enough to change the behavior of individuals who modify their cars. HB1333 aims to address that issue by increasing the fines on motorists and requiring police officers to issue a safety equipment repair order. This legislation will give local jurisdictions the tools we need to begin addressing this issue for the benefit of our community's health and wellbeing.

In 2021, the State of New York passed similar legislation to address exhaust modifications. New York significantly increased fines on both motorists and auto shops that violate the laws on illegal exhaust modifications. Lawmakers in New York recognized exactly what many residents and lawmakers in Maryland recognize today – we need stronger laws on the books to deter these illegal modifications.

HB1333 will aid our efforts to make our streets safer and more comfortable for our constituents. Thank you for your consideration of this legislation. I respectfully encourage a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christiana Rigby".

Christiana Rigby
Howard County Councilmember, District 3