



HB 656 – Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2022

House Environment & Transportation Committee

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Josh Feldmark

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Position: Support

My name is Joshua Feldmark and I write this as a representative of Bike Maryland. We represent cyclists of all abilities across the state, cyclists who ride 5 miles around the park with their families, for transportation, to a 100 mile ride. Bike Maryland has over 18,000 members from across the state. Additionally, we consistently organize or advocate on behalf of pedestrians and many other non-vehicle transportation users.

Two weeks ago I testified to this committee in favor of HB 254, the Vision Zero Implementation Act sponsored by Delegate Palakovich Carr. In that testimony I borrowed the words from the testimony of Kim Lamphier when she testified in front of you on your original passage of Vision Zero in 2019.

Let me quickly repeat Kim’s words: The concept of vision zero is to shift our first priority from getting motor vehicles to their destination as fast as possible to making sure everyone gets to their destination safely. Vision Zero recognizes that all traffic fatalities are preventable even though human decision making will always be fallible. It relies on infrastructure, engineering, and policies to prevent fatalities. Vision Zero examines factors that are essential for safe mobility—including roadway design, speeds, enforcement, user behavior, technology, and policies.

I mention all of this because this bill represents an equally important next step in the implementation of Vision Zero. To put it succinctly, this legislation is just good policy. It is what should be happening anyway, what things would look like if Maryland was truly committed to the safety of all its road users and to improving access to all. Specifically:

- Requiring context driven design elements for bicycles and pedestrians in all projects. Context driven design is precisely as it sounds, and is critical that the context of individual locations is studied so that the design elements will in fact, increase access and improve safety
- Incentivize near-term incremental improvements so that the most dangerous intersections may see improvements before large scale capital improvements can be made.
- A comprehensive analysis of state highways to discover commonalities among dangerous intersections and stretches of road as well as the improvements that can fix these problems
- Basic funding floors for the budget centers critical to improving safety for everyone. Frankly, this piece should not be necessary but years of neglecting these budget centers has put Maryland “behind the curve” on building and maintaining safe roads.
- Finally, transparency on the staffing commitment to the above goals.

Bike Maryland fully supports HB 656 and urges a favorable report.