

HB 0105 - SHA - Motor Vehicles - Operation When Ap

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Larry Hogan
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James F. Ports, Jr.
Secretary

January 20, 2022

The Honorable Kumar Barve
Chairman, House Environment and Transportation Committee
251 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Support – House Bill 105 – Motor Vehicles – Operation When Approaching Disabled Vehicles

Dear Chairman Barve and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports House Bill 105 as it would add an additional level of safety for Maryland’s roadway users.

House Bill 105 would require drivers to either change lanes or slow their speed when approaching a disabled vehicle, when displaying certain signals, on a highway. The MDOT State Highway Administration (SHA) has historically worked with other highway safety entities, such as law enforcement, emergency services, and the private sector, to advocate for the importance of Maryland’s “Move Over Law”. House Bill 105 seeks to impose similar standards, requiring drivers to either “move over” or to make their best effort to “move over” when approaching a disabled vehicle. In 2020, the MDOT SHA recorded 10 pedestrian fatalities on roadways due to disabled vehicles. The MDOT SHA is committed to achieving the statewide goal of reaching zero fatalities on Maryland’s roadways. In enacting this requirement, the State would be helping to further highway users, including disabled motorists.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee grant House Bill 105 a favorable report.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mitch Baldwin
Chief, Legislative Services Division
Maryland State Highway Administration
410-310-1056

Pilar Helm
Director, Office of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090

Testimony for HB105 - SDMO FINAL.pdf

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AAA Mid-Atlantic's Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 105 Motor Vehicles - Operation When Approaching Disabled Vehicles

Sponsor: Delegate Anne Healey

- AAA Mid-Atlantic supports **House Bill 105**, which requires drivers approaching a disabled vehicle displaying hazard warning lights, road flares or other caution signals from the rear to make a lane change into an available lane not immediately adjacent to the vehicle, or to slow to a reasonable and prudent speed that is safe.
- **HB 105** will expand the state's current move-over law, to cover **all** vehicles displaying hazard lights. Current law applies to emergency vehicles, tow trucks, and service vehicles.
- Adding motorists with disabled vehicles to the law will provide drivers, as well as emergency personnel and/or emergency road crews, who may be aiding them with an additional layer of protection when they are on the side of the road.
- Sadly, there are numerous examples of motorists with disabled vehicles being struck on the side of the road in Maryland. Kennedy Sookal, of Reisterstown, and Stuart Johnson, of Baltimore, were both killed in separate incidents in 2019, as they tried to change a tire on the side of the road.
- Being on the side of the road is dangerous for everyone and we have seen that even those who the law is already intended to protect are not exempt from the perils on the roadside.
- Just a few months ago, a member of our AAA family, contractor, Muhammad Shehzad, was killed on the side of the road in Howard County right after changing the tire of a AAA member.
- According to a **report from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS)**, "...it is estimated that 566 people were killed and 14,371 injured each year between 2016 and 2018 in crashes on all types of roads involving a disabled vehicle in which visibility was likely a factor."
- At AAA, we often hear from motorists that they are either unaware of state laws that require them to slow down and move over for emergency vehicles or that they are uncertain which groups or types of vehicles apply.
- A recent AAA Mid-Atlantic poll of Maryland drivers conducted last fall indicated a similar lack of understanding or awareness around the state's Move Over law, with 32%

of Maryland drivers polled indicating they were ‘unsure’ or thought there was ‘no’ Move Over law in the state.

- In the same poll, 84% of those surveyed indicated they would support move-over laws to cover motorists with disabled vehicles in Maryland.
- Whether there is a police officer, fireman, tow truck driver or motorist with a disabled vehicle on the side of the road, AAA implores motorists to slow down and, if safe to do so, move away and change lanes to create safe space around the person on the side of the road.
- With increasing speeds on our highways, it may be difficult at times for motorists to distinguish between the nuances of the law. HB 105 simplifies the law so that caution must be extended to anyone with flashing lights in a stationary vehicle on the roadside.
- AAA was instrumental in passing laws to protect first responders, tow truck operators and other vulnerable groups. We would also like to see those same protections extended to motorists with disabled vehicles.
- Several states have extended Move Over protections to include motorists with disabled vehicles at the roadside, including: Arizona, Connecticut, Illinois, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee.
- AAA applauds Delegate Healey for sponsoring this bill and for her leadership in extending protections to every vehicle on the road displaying flashing lights.
- On behalf of AAA Mid-Atlantic’s more than one million Maryland members, we urge the Committee to give **HB 105** a favorable report.

Contacts:

*Ragina C. Ali, AAA Mid-Atlantic
Public and Government Affairs Manager
443.465.5020*

*Sherrie Sims, GS Proctor & Associates
Senior Associate
410.733.7171*