

Written Testimony concerning HB1333: *Motor Vehicles - Modified Vehicle Exhaust System - Penalties*

March 9, 2022

Dear Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee of the Maryland House of Delegates:

I write in support of HB1333 and urge the Committee to approve its consideration in the full House of Delegates as soon as possible.

I am a resident of the Wheaton area of Silver Spring and live two blocks from Georgia Avenue. Since mid-2020, my neighbors and I, with few exceptions, have heard vehicles with modified exhaust systems drive down Georgia Avenue at all hours of the day, often hearing them pass within minutes of each other. The vehicle modifications that cause this are proliferating: previously, the modified vehicles could only be witnessed driving down Georgia Avenue. Since January 2022, however, I have seen increasing numbers of vehicles parked in my neighborhood sporting modified exhaust systems, and though their cruising speed is lower on our street, the noise they generate is impossible to miss once in operation. Failing to curb this behavior now will ensure that the problem continues to worsen.

Encountering these modified vehicles is a frequent occurrence in other parts of Maryland I have visited as well, but rather than share more anecdotes, I note here that this phenomenon has caught the attention of many others. *NBC 4 Washington* [reported](#) on the trend last summer and noted that police in Gaithersburg stopped over 100 vehicles with modified exhaust systems in *just one night* last year.

This is a nuisance to many Maryland residents, but I am particularly concerned for those who may be uniquely vulnerable to the effects of modified exhaust systems. For example, I have noticed that some systems produce sounds akin to gunshots when a driver accelerates and then lets off the gas – medical professionals [cite](#) backfiring cars as a trigger of post-traumatic stress syndrome symptoms among veterans.

The enforcement and penalties currently in place for illegal exhaust modifications are evidently insufficient to deter their growing use. I reiterate my support for HB1333 and urge a favorable Committee decision and its ultimate ratification.

Respectfully,

John A. Petrushka, Jr.