

HB0070 – Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023

House Environment & Transportation Committee

January 31, 2023

Tom Rinker, President
Frederick Bicycle Coalition
president@bikefrederick.org

Position: Support

Greetings Chair and Members of the Committee

I am an avid cyclist, a mobile bike service owner, Frederick County resident and President of Frederick Bicycle Coalition. [Frederick Bicycle Coalition](#) represents a broad coalition of recreational, commuter, mountain and adaptive cyclists. Our mission is to work with government, organizations, and individuals to promote increased and safe access for bicyclists and others in the Frederick County. We have over 1,700 followers on Facebook.

Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023 (HB 70) will provide the necessary resources for SHA to fix dangerous state roads for our vulnerable road users. The bill would act on the following measures:

- Increase annual budget spending levels on already identified safety and access gaps for our pedestrians and bicyclists
- Apply Context Driven Design Elements and FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures in current and future transportation infrastructure preservation and maintenance projects
- Implement near-term, interim improvements that enhance safety in new transportation infrastructure and engineering projects taking 12 months or more to complete

Vulnerable road user fatalities are 100% preventable. No one should lose their life from choosing to walk or bike on Maryland's roadways. As stated by MDOT SHA's Zero Deaths policy, every crash is preventable and every life counts. In Maryland, the number of traffic-related pedestrian deaths is growing higher year over year. About 135 pedestrians and bicyclists are killed every year in the State of Maryland.

The status quo is not acceptable since there has been a 46% increase in pedestrian and bicyclists fatalities since 2012. MDOT, MHSO, and SHA are failing to meet NHTSA and FHWA HSIP pedestrian and bicyclist emphasis area fatality reduction targets. Preservation of state roads cannot be the budget priority at the risk of not improving roadway conditions that are dangerous to vulnerable road users and the root cause of traffic fatalities.

We request that the committee support the passage of HB 70.