

January 31, 2023

Delegate Kumar Barve, Chair
Committee on Transportation and Environment
Maryland Housing of Delegates

Position: **Support** HB 94 - Vehicle Laws - Speed Limits – Establishment

Please accept these comments on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth, the leading non-profit organization in the D.C. region, including suburban Maryland, advocating for walkable, bikeable, inclusive, transit-oriented communities as the most sustainable and equitable way for the DC region to grow and provide opportunities for all.

We would like to express our support for House Bill 94. We agree with the bill's intention to give local authorities the option to evaluate and lower speed limits on highways. Highways have a diversity of users, including people walking, biking, pushing strollers, using a wheelchair, and driving cars and trucks. The design speed and the posted speed limit are often too high, and do not sufficiently accommodate the safety and access needs of different users. Drivers operating vehicles at high speeds is a grave danger to people. Collisions often result in severe injury and death. In fact, recent years have been the deadliest for people walking in decades. According to [Dangerous by Design](#), "the four most recent years on record (2016-2019) are the most deadly years for pedestrian deaths since 1990."

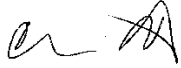
This bill enables local authorities to assess and change the speed limit to a more appropriate vehicle speed to better balance the needs of different users of a highway. Posted speed limits, along with clear signage, equitable enforcement, other deterrence measures, and most importantly, redesigning a roadway to a lower design speed, are all tools to ensure safe use of Maryland's public rights of way.

We support this bill and ask that the state allow local authorities to set speed limits appropriate to a local context. This is consistent with SHA's "context driven" approach and Vision Zero goals for state roads. Adjusting posted speed limits is one of the many tools needed to operate safe highways. Lower speed limits that better fit the local context, along with lower roadway design speeds for a particular community are crucial tools for addressing Maryland's safety and economic development goals. We ask the committee to give a favorable report to this bill.

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Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Cort
Policy Director