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Health and Government Operations
Committee

Subcommittees

Health Occupations and Long Term Care

Public Health and Minority
Health Disparities

House Chair

Joint Committee on Program Open Space
and Agricultural Land Preservation

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of HB1027 - Vehicle Laws - Bus Lane Monitoring Systems -
Statewide Expansion**

February 24, 2023

Thank You Chair Barve, Vice-Chair Stein, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee, I am Delegate Robbyn Lewis testifying on behalf of HB1027, which will deliver better bus service throughout Maryland.

This is enabling legislation that allows the Maryland Department of Transportation to deliver better bus service by enforcing, or “protecting” dedicated bus lanes statewide. Driving or stopping in a dedicated bus lane is prohibited - except under specific conditions, such as right turns - and subject to penalty. Protecting dedicated bus lanes like this leads to quicker, more reliable service.

If this sounds familiar, it's because HB1027 expands on an innovative local bill that this Committee passed last year: HB53 enabled the Baltimore City Department of Transportation that established bus lane monitoring systems in statute, and authorized that agency to use recorded images captured by automated camera technology to enforce dedicated bus lanes. That bill was enacted and became effective in October 2022. (In a separate bill that this Committee also passed, we further enabled the city to plow those bus lane enforcement back into the local complete streets program in a separate bill, creating a virtuous circle of investment in improved transit and walkability.)

Why focus on bus service? Because despite its humble status, it is the transit system workhorse. It is a lifeline for millions of Marylanders, who depend on it everyday: front-line health care workers, seniors, state employees, folks with disabilities, students. They deserve fast, reliable, better bus service.

In addition, the bus is also key to reaching our climate goals. The [transportation sector is the leading contributor](#) of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, generating It also consumes the most fossil fuel. Most emissions come from privately-owned personal vehicles and light-duty trucks,

although of course there has been some [decline](#) in GHG due to the advent of electric and hybrid vehicles. And while bus transit contributes far less GHG than private vehicles, we have the potential to lure more folks out of their cars and onto the bus if we improve bus service.

While the 2022 bill enables automated enforcement using stationary cameras, I believe that the future belongs to on-board, bus-mounted cameras. However, the use of such cameras requires statewide enabling legislation.

To that end, I would like to bring proposed amendments to the Committee's attention. These are still being drafted, but I will describe them. First, working closely with MDOT, I have considered and accepted a number of amendments that will establish workgroups to, firstly, determine the costs and benefits of on-board camera enforcement, and secondly, to make recommendations on effective curb side management on dedicated bus lanes.

You will hear testimony from the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority (WMATA) about their implementation of on-board bus lane enforcement, and from a company that creates this technology that is currently being used in Washington DC, Philadelphia and other cities.

By improving the quality of bus services in Maryland, we are changing hundreds of thousands of lives. For those reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on HB1027.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Lewis', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Delegate Robbyn Lewis

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