

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment
Maryland SB 902: Wildlife – Protections and Highway Crossings
Oppose | February 26, 2024

Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies¹ (NAMIC) thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments in opposition to Senate Bill 902.

NAMIC consists of nearly 1,500 member companies, including seven of the top 10 property/casualty insurers in the United States. The association supports local and regional mutual insurance companies on main streets across America as well as many of the country's largest national insurers.

As drafted, SB 902 establishes a fund by which insurers shall establish and collect an annual wildlife-vehicle collision mitigation fee for each vehicle in the state for which the insurer provides coverage. The concern with the bill as proposed is auto insurance and insurers are not the appropriate source for this fund. Auto insurance is typically written on 6-month policies and consumers can, and often do, change their coverage through out the year. Including this requirement would be difficult, if not impossible to track and administer effectively. A more appropriate place to apply such a fee would be with the Department of Motor Vehicles based on the registration of vehicles in the state. This approach provides a more stable source to collect such a fee and the mechanism is already in place to collect such a fee as other fees are added on to vehicle registration to help fund various efforts.

NAMIC opposes SB 902 as written because insurance companies are not the appropriate venue to establish and collect such a fee. If amendments are being considered to improve this legislation, NAMIC would be happy to assist to help mitigate our concerns.

Thank you.



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¹ NAMIC member companies write \$357 billion in annual premiums and represent 69 percent of homeowners, 56 percent of automobile, and 31 percent of the business insurance markets. Through its advocacy programs NAMIC promotes public policy solutions that benefit member companies and the policyholders they serve and fosters greater understanding and recognition of the unique alignment of interests between management and policyholders of mutual companies.