

HB0511WrayTestimony.pdf

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Position: FAV

HB 511: Vehicle Laws - Bicycles - Operation at Intersections
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Brendan Wray - FAVORABLE

February 15, 2024

Chair Korman and Committee Members,

I am in support of HB0511 - Vehicle Laws - Bicycles - Operation at Intersections. Roadway safety for all users is a paramount transportation concern. HB 511 would make Maryland's roadways safer for bicyclists, a critical portion of users that Maryland should seek to grow to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) if Maryland is to achieve Governor Moore's goals to reduce carbon emissions by 60 percent from 2006 levels by 2031.

Intersections are particularly dangerous for bicyclists. 54.5% of bicyclist injuries occur at intersections, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Bicyclists are at risk of being rear-ended when stationary, 'right hooked' by turning vehicles, or sideswiped by vehicles accelerating past them after a stop. These risks are exacerbated for women such as my wife, a bike commuter to the University of Maryland, and parents towing bike trailers with children, who take longer to accelerate from a stop. Allowing bicycle safety stops via HB 511 would reduce these threats.

So far, eight states and the District of Columbia have adopted the Bicycle Safety Stop, including Delaware, where reported crashes at intersections involving bicycles dropped 23% in the 30 months after the change. Maryland should join them.

Opponents say that road laws designed for cars should apply to bicyclists. In Maryland, they currently do. But there's a difference between a bike and a car or truck. Bicyclists are far more vulnerable than drivers. Allowing a bicyclist to keep rolling lessens the time they are exposed in an intersection and, not incidentally, delaying traffic. Additionally, there is no evidence showing bicyclist stop-as-yield laws have increased bike conflicts with other bikes or pedestrians. Bicycling becomes faster and more convenient, which in turn will encourage ridership. Drivers – and our environment, since biking is green – will share the benefit.

Finally, a Bicycle Safety Stop law has racial-justice implications. Failure to stop is currently grounds for a traffic citation, and we must acknowledge the gaping racial disparities in traffic enforcement, including here in Maryland. The stats I will cite are from other areas, however. A 2015 report revealed that 73% of Tampa bicycle stops involved Black bicyclists, in a city that is only 26% Black. In Seattle, Black bicyclists were cited for helmet infractions 4 times as often as White bicyclists, prompting backlash and repeal of the longstanding law. Allowing bicycle safety stops – removing one potential pretext for police interaction – will mean safer and more welcoming streets for Maryland's Black bicyclists.

I urge a Favorable HB 511 committee report and House of Delegates floor vote.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation.

Brendan Wray
College Park, MD

Delaware Yield Crash Data – Bike Delaware Inc.pdf

Uploaded by: Jon Korin

Position: FAV



DELAWARE YIELD CRASH DATA

MAKING CYCLING AND WALKING SAFE, CONVENIENT AND FUN IN DELAWARE

In October of 2017, Governor Carney signed the [Bicycle Friendly Delaware Act](#) into law. The Act contained a provision (known as the *Delaware Yield*) making it lawful for people using bicycles to safely yield at stop sign-controlled intersections. The Delaware State Police provided the following data on crashes involving bicycles in the 30 months before the passage of the Act and, for comparison, the 30 months after:

Crashes Involving Bicycles in Delaware (2014-2020)		
November 1, 2014 through April 30, 2017 (30 months)	November 1, 2017 through April 30, 2020 (30 months)	CHANGE (%)
All Crashes Involving Bicycles At Stop Sign Intersections ONLY		
82	63	-23%
All OTHER Crashes Involving Bicycles		
383	351	-8%
All Fatal Crashes Involving Bicycles At Stop Sign-Controlled Intersections		
0	0	0%

According to the Delaware State Police, crashes involving bicycles specifically at *stop sign – controlled intersections* fell by **23%** in the 30 months after Governor Carney signed the Bicycle Friendly Delaware Act into law (compared to the comparable 30 month preceding period). At the same time, all *other* crashes involving bicycles in Delaware only fell 8%.

Increased VISIBILITY and Reduced EXPOSURE

For cyclists, the safety value of the *Delaware Yield* is intuitive. It fits with our everyday riding experience. But for people who experience Delaware streets primarily from behind a vehicle windshield, why a more “permissive” Rule of the Road actually makes our streets safer may be more difficult to understand and appreciate. So here’s what’s happening: There are **two general strategies** for cyclists to reduce risk at intersections: (1) **increase our VISIBILITY** to drivers and (2) **reduce our EXPOSURE** (i.e decrease the amount of time we spend in an intersection). The *Delaware Yield* maneuver enables cyclists to do both of these things. By permitting cyclists to retain a *modest amount of forward momentum*, the law makes cyclists *easier for drivers to see*: Human visual perception has been evolutionarily optimized to be more sensitive to moving than stationary objects and it’s also easier for drivers to see things that are in front of them than to their side. And cyclists also reduce the total amount of time that we are exposed to a possible crash with vehicles, *entering and exiting intersections more quickly* than we could if we were required to always come to a complete stop.

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HB511 Bicycle Safety Yield - Pan-organization supp

Uploaded by: Jon Korin

Position: FAV



HB511 – Bicycle Operation at Intersections - Bicycle Safety Yield

House Environment & Transportation Committee

February 15, 2024

Position: Support

Greetings Chair and Members of the Committee

Our mission is to promote bicycling, increase safety, improve conditions, and provide a voice for bicyclists in Maryland. We partner with advocacy organizations to promote vulnerable road user safety legislation on the state and county level and work with government agencies, including police departments, to develop policy and awareness campaigns that protect the rights and well-being of bicyclists and pedestrians in Maryland.

We the undersigned represent multiple community-based organizations advocating for safe biking, walking and active transportation, submit this testimony on behalf of tens of thousands of members across the State of Maryland.

As bicycling has increased in popularity across the United States and provides many environmental, economic, and health benefits, there is a need for creating a safe transportation system which makes people the priority; using all available tools to help achieve zero injuries and fatalities on our roadways and allowing all people to get to their destinations safely. HB511 will help with this effort by authorizing cyclists to slow down and yield when appropriate during a turn or proceeding through an intersection with a stop sign.

There are currently 11 states and the District of Columbia that have “Bicycle Safety Yield” laws on their books, including several who have enacted these laws in the past few years ([NHTSA Bicyclist Stop As Yield Fact Sheet, 2022](#)). In 1982, Idaho was the first State to pass such a law, commonly known as the “Idaho Stop Law.” After Idaho adopted the law, bicyclist injuries from traffic crashes declined by 14.5% the following year ([Bicycle Safety and Choice, Meggs 2010](#)). In our neighboring state, the “Delaware Yield” led to decreases in traffic crashes involving bicyclists at stop sign intersections by 23% in the 30 months after the law’s passage ([Delaware Yield Crash Data, 2020](#)). You can view a 1 ½ minute video from Delaware at this [link](#).

By permitting cyclists to retain a modest amount of forward momentum, the law makes it easier for drivers to see cyclists since the human mind is keenly attuned to detecting moving rather than stationary objects. And by reducing the time that cyclists are in the intersections, they are

able to enter and exit intersections more quickly than if they were required to come to a complete stop. For many people on bikes, the first few pedal strokes from a complete stop can be slow and wobbly. These laws do not negate a bicyclist's responsibility to yield to other traffic before crossing an intersection or to follow all work zone traffic rules.

2023 saw the highest number of traffic fatalities in Maryland since 2007 with approximately 600 fatalities and increasing numbers of pedestrians and cyclists. This bill will help to advance Maryland's Vision Zero goals by enhancing the safety and protection of cyclists, and have the added benefits of positively impacting our environment and promoting multi-modal and active transportation in our state. HB511 will align Maryland law with the safe practice already utilized by many cyclists.

We request that the committee support the passage of HB511.

Baltimore Bicycling Club (BBC)

Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis & Anne Arundel County (BikeAAA)

Bike Maryland

Bikemore

Bike HoCo

East Coast Greenway Alliance

Frederick Bicycle Coalition

Terps for Bike Lanes

Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA)

Worcester County Bike and Pedestrian Coalition

NHTSABicyclist Yield As Stop Fact Sheet.pdf

Uploaded by: Jon Korin

Position: FAV

Traffic Safety Facts



Bicyclist “Stop-As-Yield” Laws and Safety Fact Sheet

Background

Fatalities in traffic crashes involving bicyclists and other cyclists continue to rise. From 2011 to 2020, bicyclist and other cyclist fatalities increased by 38% from 682 in 2011 to 938 in 2020 (Stewart, 2022). In 2020, 26% of bicyclist and other cyclist fatalities occurred at intersections, which are extremely hazardous for bicyclists and present a high risk for crashes where bicyclists cross paths with motorists (NHTSA, 2022).

Bicycling has increased in popularity across the United States and provides many environmental, economic, and health benefits. Further, people in low-income, marginalized communities and communities of color may rely on biking as their primary mode of transportation. A safe transportation system makes people the priority and is designed to accommodate the mistakes people make. This approach requires all road users to work together using all available tools to help achieve zero injuries and fatalities on our Nation’s roadways. The ultimate goal is a transportation system that allows all people to get to their destinations safely.

Communities across the United States have been exploring ways to increase bicyclist safety and reduce confusion in potentially hazardous and high-risk situations. Many States have enacted bicycle safety laws to enhance safety and protect all road users. For example, bicyclist stop-as-yield laws allow bicyclists to treat stop signs as yield signs and/or red-light signals as stop signs. These laws allow bicyclists to mitigate risk to their advantage. “Stopping discourages bicycling, substantially increasing time, energy expenditure, discomfort, risk of collisions, and risk for strain and overuse injuries” (Tekle, 2017).

In 1982, Idaho was the first State to pass such a law, commonly known as the “Idaho Stop Law.” The law allows bicyclists to yield at stop signs and proceed when safe, rather than come to a complete stop. After Idaho adopted the law, bicyclist injuries from traffic crashes declined by 14.5% the following year (Meggs, 2010). In



2017, Delaware adopted a similar, limited stop-as-yield law, known as the "Delaware Yield." Traffic crashes involving bicyclists at stop sign intersections fell by 23% in the 30 months after the law’s passage, compared to the previous 30 months. Eight States (Arkansas, Delaware, Idaho, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Utah, and Washington) have similar laws. Colorado passed a law in 2018 that allowed local municipalities to adopt standard language on safe bicycle yielding at stops. Table 1 shows a summary of State law characteristics. These laws do not negate a bicyclist’s responsibility to yield to other traffic before crossing an intersection or to follow all work zone traffic rules. State laws vary, so bicyclists must be sure to know the laws in their State.

Table 1. List of States With Stop-As-Yield Laws

State	Enacted	Yield At Stop Sign	Red Signal As Stop Sign
Arkansas (§ 27.51-1803)	2019	Yes	Yes
Delaware (§ 4196A)	2017	Yes	No
Idaho (§ 49-720)	1982	Yes	Yes
North Dakota (§ 39-10.1-05.1)	2021	Yes	No
Oklahoma (§ 47.11-202.1)	2021	Yes	Yes
Oregon (§ 683.1)	2020	Yes	No
Utah (§ 41-6a-902 & § 41-6a-1105)	2021	Yes	Yes
Washington (§ 46.61.190)	2020	Yes	No

Benefits: Safety, Environmental, and Transportation Impact

The benefits of bicycling extend beyond personal and physical, to environmental benefits that can lead to healthier, quieter, cleaner, and safer streets. Fewer motor vehicles on the road equate to less congestion and lower emission outputs.

Bicyclist stop-as-yield laws allow cyclists to mitigate risk to their advantage, increase their visibility to drivers and reduce exposure. Bicyclists have greater incentive to yield, as they are at high risk for injury at intersections. One study cites research showing that pedestrians and bicyclists exert more care and attention before crossing red signals than green (Leth et al., 2014). A naturalistic study of bicyclists in Florida’s Tampa



Bay area found that bicyclists highly complied with general traffic rules (88.1% in the daytime, 87.5% at night). In contrast, drivers were mostly noncompliant with the law on yielding to bicyclists’ right-of-way (Lin et al., 2017). Additionally, there is no evidence showing bicyclist stop-as-yield laws have increased bike conflicts with other bikes or pedestrians. Roadway collisions between bicyclists with other cyclists or pedestrians are uncommon, as found in an Australian study (O’Hern & Oxley, 2019). When bicyclists can maintain a safe but precautionary momentum through an intersection, it allows continuous traffic flow.

Finally, bicyclist stop-as-yield laws decriminalize a riding behavior, possibly encouraging more ridership. More bicyclists on the roadway traveling together increases their visibility and attention by motorists, a concept referred to as “Safety in Numbers” (SIN). Studies of SIN show motorists drive more cautiously, and bicyclists are safer on roads when traveling with a higher volume of bicyclists. Research by Meggs (2010) suggests that removing stops may reduce injury risk by half through SIN alone.

Summary

A safe transportation system makes people the priority. Working together to enhance bicycle safety by preventing and eliminating crashes that lead to serious injuries and fatalities is more important now than ever. Many States have enacted bicyclist stop-as-yield laws to enhance safety and protect cyclists. Based upon the current research and data available, these laws showed added safety benefits for bicyclists in States where they were evaluated, and may positively affect the environment, traffic, and transportation.

For more information, please visit www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/bicycle-safety.



References

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HB 511 - Vehicle Laws - Bicycles - Operation at In

Uploaded by: Joseph Jakuta

Position: FAV

Committee: Environment and Transportation
Testimony on: HB 511 - Vehicle Laws - Bicycles - Operation at Intersections
Submitting: Joseph Jakuta, Resident of Mount Rainier, MD
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 15, 2024

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing my testimony today in support of HB 511. I am a resident of Prince George's County and have been a regular bicycle commuter the early 2000's predominately in the Washington, DC area, but also for several years in Baltimore City. HB511 is a common-sense safety measure that would put in place stop-as-yield, colloquially called the Idaho Stop in Maryland.

This is primarily a safety issue for bicyclist and given the increasing number of casualties on Maryland roadways we should be taking every effort to make traveling safer. It might seem counter intuitive that stop-as-yield would help with that, but according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) after enactment of stop bicycling collisions reduced by 23% at intersections in states where adoption occurred.

As someone that has been biking for so long I can attest to why. A biker is more likely to get hit by someone turning right at an intersection when the biker is going straight. And I do mean I know this, since this is how I have been hit several times. Allowing the bicyclist to get out in front of the situation increases visibility to the driver making the right-hand turn making the bicyclists trip safer and more likely that the driver will not cause a crash.

Of course, the law would still require the biker to stop if cars already have the right of way or are approaching closely from other directions, which is totally reasonable and appropriate.

Also, Washington, DC enacted stop-as-yield last year. As someone who regularly crosses between DC and Maryland regularly, with most of my time spent bicycling in Washington, DC. As reenter my home state it has gotten increasingly confusing to remember which laws are on the books, especially when the stop-as-yield is so much safer for myself as a bicyclist. Though I do not bike on the Eastern Shore typically, it should be noted that Delaware also has stop-as-yield in place.

I love bicycle commuting. It saves money, makes myself healthier, gets me to and from work much quicker than other means, and benefits others health by reducing pollution. But the one thing that does give me pause every day is that it makes it more likely that my young children may lose me in an accident. The General Assembly has the opportunity to make that less likely this year.

Please adopt a FAVORABLE recommendation on HB511.

Bike MD 2024 HB 511 – bike safety yield.pdf

Uploaded by: Joshua Feldmark

Position: FAV



HB 511 – Vehicle Laws – Bicycles – Operation at Intersections

House Environment & Transportation Committee

February 15, 2024

Josh Feldmark

joshua@bikemd.org

Position: Support

My name is Joshua Feldmark and I write this as a representative of Bike Maryland. We represent cyclists of all abilities across the state, cyclists who ride 5 miles around the park with their families, for transportation, to a 100 mile ride. Bike Maryland has over 18,000 members from across the state. Additionally, we consistently organize or advocate on behalf of pedestrians and many other non-vehicle transportation users.

There are a great many challenges to advocating for bikes and pedestrians in a society that for decades has had it ingrained into them that our road network is exclusively for cars. This gets much harder when we advocate for something that is counterintuitive to people who do not ride. It gets each harder than that when what we are advocating for is for cyclists to follow a different set of rules than automobiles.

All of that to say we here at Bike Maryland understand that this is a hard sell. All we can tell you is that the data says very clearly that a bike safety yield is, in fact, the safest way for cyclists to manage a stop sign. Overwhelmingly, drivers are trained and their brains are programmed to monitor for other automobiles and all too often they legitimately do not process the existence of a bicycle at the intersection. Therefore it is safest for the cyclist to gauge when it is safe to go and to spend as little time in the intersection as possible. This hopefully explains why a bike safety yield will be the safest option for Maryland roads.

Bike Maryland fully supports HB 511 and urges a favorable report.

2024-HB0511-Bicycle Safety Yield-T4BL-FAV (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Nicholas Marks

Position: FAV



HB 511: Bicycle Safety Yield - Authorizations and Requirements
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Terps For Bike Lanes – FAVORABLE

February 1, 2024

Chair Korman and Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of Terps for Bike Lanes, an organization dedicated to promoting safe and sustainable transportation options on and around our campus, to express our strong support for the legislative authorization allowing a person operating a bicycle to cautiously proceed through a stop sign at an intersection on a highway with two or fewer lanes for moving traffic without coming to a complete stop under certain circumstances.

This proposed legislation, identified as HB0511 during the legislative session, resonates with our mission to create a safe and inclusive environment for cyclists. We believe that allowing cyclists to make turns or proceed through intersections without a complete stop, provided they reduce their speed to a reasonable rate and yield the right-of-way to specified vehicles under certain circumstances, is a positive step towards recognizing the unique dynamics of bicycle traffic.

Intersections pose significant dangers for cyclists, with 54.5% of cyclist injuries occurring at these junctions, as per the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Cyclists face the risk of being struck from behind while stationary, being caught in a 'right hook' by turning vehicles, or being sideswiped by vehicles accelerating past them after a stop. The implementation of Stop-as-Yield under HB 511 could mitigate these risks. Currently, eight states and the District of Columbia have adopted Stop-as-Yield, with Delaware experiencing a 23% decrease in reported crashes involving bicycles at intersections within 30 months of the change. Maryland should follow suit.

Stop-as-Yield carries implications for racial justice. Currently, failure to stop at intersections can result in a traffic citation, and we acknowledge the significant racial disparities in traffic enforcement, including within Maryland. While the statistics referenced are from other regions, a

2015 report uncovered that 73% of bicycle stops in Tampa involved Black cyclists, despite the city's Black population comprising only 26%. Similarly, in Seattle, Black cyclists were cited for helmet infractions four times more frequently than White cyclists, leading to backlash and the repeal of the longstanding law. Implementing Stop-as-Yield, which eliminates one potential pretext for police interactions, will contribute to safer and more inclusive streets for Black cyclists in Maryland.

Terps for Bike Lanes sees this legislative initiative as a practical response to the evolving landscape of transportation, where bicycles play an increasingly significant role as a sustainable and efficient mode of travel. We appreciate the effort to balance the convenience of cyclists with the safety considerations outlined in the proposed legislation.

This authorization not only acknowledges the distinct characteristics of bicycles but also supports the efficient flow of bicycle traffic, contributing to reduced congestion and improved traffic management. By carefully defining the circumstances under which cyclists can proceed without stopping, the proposed legislation strikes a reasonable balance between safety and operational efficiency.

We commend your leadership on this matter and urge you to continue supporting this legislation. By doing so, you contribute to the creation of a more bicycle-friendly environment, fostering a sustainable and inclusive transportation system for all road users. Thank you for your dedication to addressing the needs of cyclists in our community. We look forward to the positive impact that this legislation can bring to our roads and intersections. Terps For Bike Lanes urges a Favorable HB 511 committee report and House of Delegates floor vote.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Marks

President, Terps for Bike Lanes

terps4bikelanes@gmail.com

2024-HB511-Bicycle Safety Yield-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Seth Grimes

Position: FAV



HB 511: Vehicle Laws - Bicycles - Operation at Intersections
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Washington Area Bicyclist Association – FAVORABLE

February 15, 2024

Chair Korman and Committee Members,

Roadway safety is a paramount transportation concern. HB 511 would make Maryland's roadways safer for bicyclists. The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA), an advocacy organization with 1,200 Maryland members, supports the bill.

Intersections are particularly dangerous for bicyclists. 54.5% of bicyclist injuries occur at intersections, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Bicyclists are at risk of being rear-ended when stationary, 'right hooked' by turning vehicles, or sideswiped by vehicles accelerating past them after a stop. Allowing a cyclist to proceed through a Stop sign without stopping, however yielding to pedestrians and to vehicles that have the intersection right of way – what proponents call Bicycle Safety Yield – will reduce these threats, creating safer intersections and easing traffic flow for all road users.

So far, eleven states and the District of Columbia have adopted Bicycle Safety Yield, including Delaware, where reported crashes at intersections involving bicycles dropped 23% in the 30 months after the change. Maryland should join them.

Opponents say that road laws designed for motor vehicles should apply to bicyclists. In Maryland, they currently do. But there's a difference between a bike and a car or truck. Bicyclists are far more vulnerable than drivers. Allowing a bicyclist to keep rolling lessens the time they are exposed in an intersection and delaying other traffic. Bicycling becomes faster and more convenient, which in turn will encourage ridership. Drivers – and our environment, since biking is green – will share the benefit.

Finally, Bicycle Safety Yield has racial-justice implications. Failure to stop is currently grounds for a traffic citation, and we recognize the gaping racial disparities in traffic enforcement, including here in Maryland. The stats I will cite are from other areas, however. A 2015 report revealed that 73% of Tampa bicycle stops involved Black bicyclists, in a city that is only 26% Black. In Seattle, Black bicyclists were cited for helmet infractions 4 times as often as White bicyclists, prompting backlash and repeal of the longstanding law. Allowing bicycle safety stops – removing one potential pretext for police interaction – will mean safer and more welcoming streets for Maryland's Black bicyclists.

WABA urges a Favorable HB 511 committee report and House of Delegates floor vote.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation.

Seth Grimes, seth.grimes@waba.org

HB0511 Bike Safety Yield - FBC FAVORABLE.pdf

Uploaded by: Shayne Boucher

Position: FAV



HB0511 – Bicycle Operation at Intersections House Environment & Transportation Committee

Feb 15, 2024

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

Position: Support

Greetings Chair and Members of the Committee

[Frederick Bicycle Coalition](#) represents a broad spectrum 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 Frederick County. We have over 1,700 followers on Facebook.

As bicycling has increased in popularity across the United States and provides many environmental, economic, and health benefits, there is a need for creating a safe transportation system which makes people the priority; using all available tools to help achieve zero injuries and fatalities on our roadways and allowing all people to get to their destinations safely. HB0511 will help with this effort by authorizing cyclists to slow down and yield when appropriate during a turn or proceeding through an intersection.

There are currently 10 states and the District of Columbia that have Bike Safety Yield laws on their books, five of which enacted these laws in the past two years ([NHTSA Bicyclist Stop As Yield Fact Sheet, 2022](#)). In 1982, Idaho was the first State to pass such a law, commonly known as the "Idaho Stop Law." After Idaho adopted the law, bicyclist injuries from traffic crashes declined by 14.5% the following year ([Bicycle Safety and Choice, Meggs 2010](#)). In our neighboring state, the "Delaware Yield" led to decreases in traffic crashes involving bicyclists at stop sign intersections by 23% in the 30 months after the law's passage ([Delaware Yield Crash Data, 2020](#)).

By permitting cyclists to retain a modest amount of forward momentum, the law makes it easier for drivers to see cyclists since the human mind is keenly attuned to detecting moving rather than stationary objects. And by reducing the time that cyclists are in the intersections, they are able to enter and exit intersections more quickly than if they were required to come to a complete stop. These laws do not negate a bicyclist's responsibility to yield to other traffic before crossing an intersection or to follow all work zone traffic rules.

This bill will help to advance Maryland's Vision Zero goals by enhancing the safety and protection of cyclists and have the added benefits of positively impacting our environment and promoting multi-modal and active transportation in our state.

Frederick Bicycle Coalition urges a FAVORABLE HB0511 committee report and House floor vote.

House Bill 511 - UNFAVORABLE.pdf

Uploaded by: Debi Jasen

Position: UNF

House Bill 511 - UNFAVORABLE
Environment and Transportation Committee

Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee;

Please give House Bill 511, regarding new rules for cyclists, an Unfavorable report.

It has taken a long time for drivers and cyclists to learn that cyclists have the same rules and responsibilities when on the road as motor vehicle drivers have. Some still haven't gotten the message. To change the law so that cyclists would no longer have to make a complete stop at a stop sign will confuse drivers, and could even cause problems for any cyclists behind the first to approach the intersection. I believe this legislation would make it more dangerous for cyclists, drivers, and even pederstrians who are trying to cross the road.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Debi Jasen
Pasadena, MD

HB511_Bicycles - Operation at Intersections_gls_2.

Uploaded by: Gail Sunderman

Position: UNF

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

HB511 – Vehicle Laws - Bicycles – Operation at Intersections

POSITION: Oppose

By: Gail Sunderman

Date: February 15, 2024

I am a resident of Baltimore City who has to navigate bicyclists who do not follow the traffic laws. I once almost hit a bicyclist who speed past me at a stop light as I was making a left turn on a green light. I barely missed hitting the bicyclist. Another time I made a left hand turn, and almost hit a bicyclist traveling the wrong way on a divided boulevard. **I oppose HB511 Vehicle Laws – Bicycles – Operation at Intersections**, which would allow persons operating a bicycle to proceed without stopping at intersections. This bill, if passed will only make the roads less safe.

Many terms in the bill are ambiguous. The bill states that a bicyclist can proceed through a stop sign without stopping. Does that include only signs or does it include stop lights? The lack of clarity is confusing. Others terms, such as “*may cautiously* make a turn” will be defined differently by different people. What is “*a reasonable rate*” of speed for a bicycle? And how ‘near’ is “near enough to the intersection that is poses an immediate danger”? Is ‘near’ a measured distance? Or does ‘near’ depend on different variables, including the judgement of the bicyclist, road conditions, visibility, and weather? This ambiguity will cause confusion among both motorists and bicyclists.

According to the National Highway Traffic Administration, intersections are particularly dangerous for bicyclists. This bill will only make intersections more dangerous if bicyclists are legally allowed to go through an intersection without stopping. Unlike cars which, after stopping at an intersection can make a left hand turn on a red light, this bill does not require bicyclists to stop before proceeding through an intersection.

The roads would be safer if bicyclists abide by the same traffic laws as motorists. This bill will not make the roads safer. I urge an unfavorable report on HB511.

HB 511 Bicycles at Intersections -- UNFAVORABLE.pdf

Uploaded by: KIMBERLY EGAN

Position: UNF



MARYLAND
HORSE
COUNCIL

P.O. Box 606 | Lisbon, Maryland 21797
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One Common Bond: The Horse
One Common Voice: The Horse Council

Testimony of the Maryland Horse Council on HB 511

Vehicle Laws – Bicycles – Operation at Intersections

Environment and Transportation Committee – Feb. 15, 2024

UNFAVORABLE

The Maryland Horse Council (MHC) is a membership-based trade association that represents the state-wide horse industry in Maryland. Our members include horse farms; horse related businesses; equestrian competitors; trainers; individual enthusiasts; equine-assisted therapy programs; and breed, interest, and discipline associations. We represent over 30,000 Marylanders who make their living with horses, or who just own and love them. We are a \$2.9 billion industry.¹

We oppose HB 511 on vagueness grounds, on public safety grounds, and on the grounds that there is no policy imperative – no reason -- to exempt bicyclists from Maryland’s traffic laws.

This bill would, if passed, apply to highways with two or fewer lanes, such as rural roads, which are the roads that we drive horse trailers on every day. Marylanders who are driving horse trailers need everyone else on the road to follow the traffic rules because the consequences of traffic accidents involving large animals can be fatal to drivers, passengers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and the animals they are hauling.

According to the Maryland Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (2019), highway engineers can consider a stop sign, yield sign, or no sign at all, if the general principles of yielding to a car with the right-of-way are sufficient to protect the public. When the general

¹ See American Horse Council Economic Impact Study for Maryland (2024), available at mdhorsecouncil.org/educational-resources/.



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principles of yielding to a car with the right-of-way are not sufficient to protect the public, however, stop signs or yield signs “should be used.” Section 2B.04.03. The decision about which sign to use, if any, is left to the safety engineer.

This bill would, if passed, override that safety engineers’ professional judgement about whether yielding to the right-of-way is sufficient to protect the public. This bill would allow bicyclists – but only bicycles -- to roll through stop signs and revert to the general principles of yielding to the right of way despite the fact that a safety engineer has already determined that the general principles of yielding to right-of-way are not safe.

Moreover, this bill would, if passed, override the safety engineers’ judgement for no discernible purpose. In what situation would it be safe enough for a bicycle to roll a stop sign but not safe enough for a passenger car or livestock trailer to do the same?

In addition, this bill, if passed, would give little guidance to anyone approaching the intersection as to which rules would apply in any specific situation – it says bicycles are exempt from the traffic laws if they are going at a “reasonable rate of speed,” unless a vehicle is “near enough” to the intersection to pose immediate danger.

There is no definition of “reasonable rate of speed” for a bicyclist. Is it the posted speed limit? Is it lower than the posted speed limit and if so, by how much? Is a motorist expected to make this geometric calculation while approaching an intersection? What metrics would a motorist use? How far away from the intersection must a driver be when she decides whether the traffic laws that apply to her also apply to the bicyclist? How near to the intersection does a car need to be to assume that the bicycle is going to stop at the stop sign? How would a driver even know that a bicyclist might be exempt from the traffic laws?

There is also no definition of “near enough,” and in our experience, a bicyclist is unlikely to judge accurately how near is “near enough” for a livestock trailer. Horse trailers traveling within posted speed limits carry more forward momentum than the average motor vehicle because of the weight of the horses – the more horses, the more momentum. This means that horse trailers cannot brake, accelerate, or change lanes as quickly as a passenger car. It is often the



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case that other drivers do not appreciate that carrying live weight requires a longer stopping distance than the average car, so trailer drivers often compensate for that by leaving even more distance between them and the traffic in front of them. Car drivers and bicyclists can misinterpret that extra stopping space and assume that the distance is safer than it is. In reality, a longer stopping distance does not convert “near enough” to “safe enough” for people hauling livestock.

The risk in a livestock trailer collision is not just to the driver. Horses who are thrown forward in a trailer risk serious injury or death to themselves and the driver, and extracting horses from a wrecked trailer is a difficult, time-consuming operation. In addition, a frightened horse can get loose and create further havoc on the road.

These concerns are not hypothetical. In June 2023, a car collided with a horse trailer in Cecil County, killing a 19-year-old woman and injuring another person. A similar accident occurred in Harford County in 2013 between a pick-up truck, a horse trailer, and a fuel delivery truck. One person died and the horses had to be sedated and taken to an emergency care clinic. In April 2018, a horse died in Caroline County when a Virginia State Trooper collided with the trailer. Two horses were killed in a July 2016 wreck in Maryland after a car cut-off the truck pulling the trailer. And in 2015, a man, his dog, and three horses died in Ohio when a passenger swerved abruptly and slowed suddenly in front of the trailer.

MHC urges an unfavorable report on HB 511.

Respectfully submitted,

THE MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL

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HB0511 - TSO - Bicycles - Operation at Intersectio

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: INFO

February 15, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
251 House Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

Re: Letter of Information – House Bill 511 – Vehicle Laws – Bicycles – Operations at Intersections

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) offers the following information for the Committee’s consideration on House Bill 511.

House Bill 511 proposes to allow a person operating a bicycle to proceed cautiously through a stop sign at an intersection if the person reduces the speed of the bicycle and yields the right-of-way to certain vehicles. This would amend existing provisions in Maryland law that requires bicyclists to come to a complete stop at stop signs before proceeding.

MDOT’s top priority is safety. The Safe System Approach recognizes that humans are vulnerable and they also make mistakes. House Bill 511 encourages more people to bicycle by empowering vulnerable road users to make decisions that protect them from injury. The “Bicyclists Stop-as-Yield Fact Sheet” issued by NHTSA in March 2022 contends, “Based upon the current research and data available, these laws showed added safety benefits for bicyclists in States where they were evaluated, and may positively affect the environment, traffic, and transportation.” The Stop-as-Yield measure is an attractive approach to improving safety because it provides a high safety benefit at no cost.

Legislation similar to House Bill 511 has been adopted in eleven other states and the District of Columbia. Outcomes related to such provisions (also referred to as the “Idaho Stop,” the “Delaware Yield,” or a bicycle “Stop-As-Yield” maneuver) are reported to include an 88% compliance rate and to have supported strong safety benefits for bicyclists. Based on this experience, the NHTSA has issued guidance to support the adoption of such laws, noting that the practice allows bicyclists to maintain a safe but cautionary momentum through an intersection, thereby allowing them to better mitigate risks to their advantage, to increase their visibility to drivers and to reduce their exposure.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information during its deliberations of House Bill 511.

Respectfully submitted,

Pilar Helm
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
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