



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