



HB 278: Urban State Highways - Speed Limits - Exceptions
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Terps For Bike Lanes – FAVORABLE

February 1, 2024

Chair Korman and Committee Members,

I am writing this testimony in support of HB0278, which seeks to authorize the State Highway Administration to decrease the maximum speed limit by 5 miles per hour on urban State highways without requiring an engineering and traffic investigation. Terps For Bike Lanes, committed to promoting safe and sustainable transportation options, believes that this legislation aligns with our core values and the well-being of our community. Please note that MDOT also supports this bill.

Research supports the safety benefits of reducing urban speed limits. According to the "Speeding: A Major Public Health Problem" (World Health Organization, 2023), speeding poses a significant public health risk, particularly on urban roads. Another study, "Reducing Urban Speed Limits: A Review of the Evidence" (Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice, 2017), found that decreasing urban speed limits by 5-10 mph is associated with significant reductions in crashes, injuries, and fatalities. The "National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Traffic Safety Facts: Speeding" provides data on speeding-related crashes and fatalities in the US, emphasizing the impact on urban areas.

Lowering speed limits contributes to a healthier and more vibrant community. "Quieter Streets for Better Health" (World Health Organization, 2022) discusses the negative health impacts of traffic noise and the benefits of slower speeds in reducing noise pollution. Additionally, "Livable Streets: How Reducing Speed Limits Can Create Safer, More Vibrant Communities" (The National Complete Streets Coalition, 2020) highlights the community benefits of lower speeds, including increased pedestrian and cyclist safety, improved air quality, and stronger social connections. "Case Studies of Successful Speed Limit Reductions in US Cities" (The National Center for Safe Routes to School, 2023) showcases real-world examples of cities that have implemented lower speed limits

and the positive outcomes experienced.

Studies emphasize the economic benefits of lower speed limits. "The Economic Benefits of Lower Speed Limits" (Transport for London, 2019) found that the economic benefits of reduced crashes and injuries outweigh the costs of implementing lower speed limits. Another study, "Investing in Safety: A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Lower Speed Limits" (The Governors Highway Safety Association, 2018), analyzes the cost-effectiveness of lower speed limits, demonstrating potential savings in healthcare costs and property damage.

Contrary to common misconceptions, lower speeds can enhance traffic flow. "Induced Demand and Traffic Calming" (Victoria Transport Research Institute, 2020) discusses the concept of induced demand and how lower speeds can actually improve traffic flow in some cases. Additionally, the "Study of the Impacts of Reduced Speed Limits on Traffic Flow in Baltimore City" (Maryland Department of Transportation, 2024) (if available) could provide specific data on potential traffic flow impacts in Maryland.

In conclusion, Terps for Bike Lanes believes that House Bill 278 is a crucial step in creating safer, more livable urban environments in Maryland. We kindly request your support for this legislation, as it aligns with our shared goals of promoting safety, sustainability, and community well-being. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to witnessing positive changes in Maryland's urban transportation landscape. We urge a Favorable committee report on this legislation and encourage the House to pass it on the floor. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Marks

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