

Environment and Transportation Committee  
February 1, 2024

Mr. Chairman, Vice Chair Boyce and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Dan Katz, and I am Vice President of Public Policy for Hayden AI, a technology company that is working to empower public transit with new tools to improve transit bus service and make it safer and more accessible.

We strongly support HB 107 because it unlocks new technology for transit systems in Maryland, so agencies here have the legislative authority to utilize technology currently available in California, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago and D.C.

This technology is working to fix a longstanding problem: illegally parked vehicles obstruct transit buses. Whether blocking a dedicated bus lane, parking at a bus stop or double parking into a lane of traffic that obstructs the safe passage of a bus, illegal parking can greatly undermine the safety and on-time performance of transit buses.

The technology is focused on objects – not people. It can identify an illegally parked car that is obstructing a bus so a transit agency can then forward that information to the local parking authority. To protect privacy, this bill requires all video evidence to be destroyed when it is no longer relevant to an active citation.

In addition to bus lane enforcement, enforcement of illegal parking in bus stops is a critical part of this bill. Blocked bus stops present serious hazards for people with disabilities and seniors. For a disabled person, a blocked bus stop can mean the difference between reaching their destination on time or late – or not reaching it at all. Illegal parking at bus stops makes boarding dangerous and sometimes impossible for wheelchair users because bus operators are unable to properly deploy wheelchair access ramps to the curb if the bus cannot pull up to the curb.

These automated enforcement systems do work and do change behavior. In New York City, some of the most congested segments in the city, with these systems in place, have seen bus lane speed improve by 36 percent. And collisions involving buses have gone down dramatically as well, in some cases as much as 34 percent.

Those are some of the safety, accessibility, and performance improvements that HB 107 can bring to Maryland.

Thank you.

Dan Katz  
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