

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,

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