

February 22, 2024

House Environment and Transportation Committee
Maryland House of Delegates

Chairman Korman and Vice Chair Boyce,

My name is Stratton Kirton, I am the vice president of government affairs for Liberty Tire Recycling, the leading tire collector, processor, and recycler in North America. I am also a proud resident of Montgomery County.

I'm here to talk about HB781 and, more broadly, ways that Maryland can look at rubber modified asphalt as a way to make our roads more sustainable.

I am happy to try and answer any and all of your questions related to rubber modified asphalt, but I want to focus my testimony today on two points: innovation in rubber modified asphalt mixes and performance in all climates.

On innovation in mixes: traditional mixes for rubber modified asphalt typically require blending equipment, extra heating, agitation, and storage tanks. However, there is another way. We produce a mix that uses a dry process called SmartMix, which is produced in a way so that rubber can be simply incorporated into an asphalt mixture at the mix plant. It does not require an additional binder, higher mixing temperatures, long mixing times, or long storage times.

Put simply—it simplifies the process of rubber modified asphalt and lowers the barriers to entry while keeping all the positives of adding rubber to roads. And while I am obviously preferential to our product, the dry mix process is not exclusive to us.

On performance in all climates: rubber modified asphalt performs well in cold, hot, and temperate climates. In fact, rubber as an additive actually improves the performance of asphalt at extreme temperatures. Asphalt has a range of about 90 degrees Celsius before it begins to fail under extreme temperatures; but rubber has a range of 148 degrees Celsius. When you put rubber into the pavement, it shares part of that temperature resiliency with the asphalt mixture.

One of my colleagues made this illustrative point: if you drive from here to Pittsburgh, the binder grade on the road probably changes four times due to the difference in climate, but you don't stop to change your tires four times because of the temperature resiliency of the rubber.

Thank you for your time today; I am happy to try and answer any questions, and any I cannot, I will follow up with you after the hearing.

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