



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL**  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

DAWN LUEDTKE  
COUNCILMEMBER  
DISTRICT 7

March 19, 2024

The Honorable Delegate Marc Korman  
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee  
Room 251  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Senate Bill 442, *Street Racing and Exhibition Driving - Prohibited Acts, Enforcement, and Penalties*

Dear Chair Korman:

**I write in strong support of Senate Bill 442**, which increases the penalties for motor vehicle violations related to participation in a race or speed contest and exhibition driving on any highway or private property that is used by the public for driving.

In the past four years, there has been a significant increase in exhibition driving events, which present dangers to drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and other road users. These events involve excessive, abrupt acceleration or deceleration; skidding, squealing, burning, or smoking of tires; swerving or swaying from side to side; the engine producing unreasonably loud, raucous, or disturbing noise; grinding the gears and the backfiring of the engine; the wheels losing contact with the ground; and transporting a passenger on or in an area of a motor vehicle that is not designed or intended for passenger transport such as the hood or roof. Participants often use vehicles and “human chains” to block roadways to other traffic, including first responders on their way to provide emergency care.

These events are invading Maryland streets from Baltimore<sup>1</sup> to Greenbelt<sup>2</sup> to Takoma Park<sup>3</sup>. Emboldened by the lack of enforcement and consequences, participants often post videos of, or even live-stream, the events, which frequently draw hundreds of spectators who gather on or around the roadway. It is challenging to crack down on this behavior for several reasons. First, the planners of these events are very

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.cbsnews.com/baltimore/news/police-break-up-several-unsanctioned-car-meet-ups-across-baltimore-city-baltimore-county/>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.shorenewsnetwork.com/2024/02/11/massive-car-takeover-in-greenbelt-leads-to-police-call-for-backup/>

<sup>3</sup><https://moco360.media/2024/02/13/takoma-park-police-warn-about-dangers-of-reckless-car-meet-ups/>

secretive about where and when the meetup will take place, often using a private social media account to broadcast the location(s) where people should congregate. When the police show up, drivers scatter and head to the next location. Additionally, the details of the event often change in real-time, making it difficult for law enforcement to stay ahead of bad actors. It is common for people to swap out license plates and use a false registration while participating, so even if there is video or photographic evidence, the plate could be bogus and the car virtually untraceable. Right now, the best our law enforcement officers can realistically do is hope to identify intel in advance of the event and set up a presence at the proposed location. That is why we need legislation to establish stricter penalties for individuals who choose to engage in this dangerous and disruptive behavior in order to deter future participation.

This kind of driving is not a victimless crime. When a person intentionally jeopardizes the safety of others, that person should face consequences. Drivers participating in these exhibitions and events do so with wanton disregard for others, and can cause serious bodily injury or even death, and law enforcement and the courts must be able to mete out similarly severe consequences for the participants.

I hear from many county residents who are deeply frustrated by the frequent instances of loud engine noise, speeding, and aggressive driving. They report feeling violated and unsafe when exhibition driving events take place in their neighborhood – often very close to their homes. Repeatedly, they ask for increased enforcement and stronger penalties, and are ultimately told that these changes must occur at the state level.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 442 from the Committee.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dawn Luedtke". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Dawn Luedtke

Cc: Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee