



HB 511: Bicycle Safety Yield - Authorizations and Requirements
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Terps For Bike Lanes – FAVORABLE

February 1, 2024

Chair Korman and Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of Terps for Bike Lanes, an organization dedicated to promoting safe and sustainable transportation options on and around our campus, to express our strong support for the legislative authorization allowing a person operating a bicycle to cautiously proceed through a stop sign at an intersection on a highway with two or fewer lanes for moving traffic without coming to a complete stop under certain circumstances.

This proposed legislation, identified as HB0511 during the legislative session, resonates with our mission to create a safe and inclusive environment for cyclists. We believe that allowing cyclists to make turns or proceed through intersections without a complete stop, provided they reduce their speed to a reasonable rate and yield the right-of-way to specified vehicles under certain circumstances, is a positive step towards recognizing the unique dynamics of bicycle traffic.

Intersections pose significant dangers for cyclists, with 54.5% of cyclist injuries occurring at these junctions, as per the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Cyclists face the risk of being struck from behind while stationary, being caught in a 'right hook' by turning vehicles, or being sideswiped by vehicles accelerating past them after a stop. The implementation of Stop-as-Yield under HB 511 could mitigate these risks. Currently, eight states and the District of Columbia have adopted Stop-as-Yield, with Delaware experiencing a 23% decrease in reported crashes involving bicycles at intersections within 30 months of the change. Maryland should follow suit.

Stop-as-Yield carries implications for racial justice. Currently, failure to stop at intersections can result in a traffic citation, and we acknowledge the significant racial disparities in traffic enforcement, including within Maryland. While the statistics referenced are from other regions, a

2015 report uncovered that 73% of bicycle stops in Tampa involved Black cyclists, despite the city's Black population comprising only 26%. Similarly, in Seattle, Black cyclists were cited for helmet infractions four times more frequently than White cyclists, leading to backlash and the repeal of the longstanding law. Implementing Stop-as-Yield, which eliminates one potential pretext for police interactions, will contribute to safer and more inclusive streets for Black cyclists in Maryland.

Terps for Bike Lanes sees this legislative initiative as a practical response to the evolving landscape of transportation, where bicycles play an increasingly significant role as a sustainable and efficient mode of travel. We appreciate the effort to balance the convenience of cyclists with the safety considerations outlined in the proposed legislation.

This authorization not only acknowledges the distinct characteristics of bicycles but also supports the efficient flow of bicycle traffic, contributing to reduced congestion and improved traffic management. By carefully defining the circumstances under which cyclists can proceed without stopping, the proposed legislation strikes a reasonable balance between safety and operational efficiency.

We commend your leadership on this matter and urge you to continue supporting this legislation. By doing so, you contribute to the creation of a more bicycle-friendly environment, fostering a sustainable and inclusive transportation system for all road users. Thank you for your dedication to addressing the needs of cyclists in our community. We look forward to the positive impact that this legislation can bring to our roads and intersections. Terps For Bike Lanes urges a Favorable HB 511 committee report and House of Delegates floor vote.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Marks

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