

Stein Testimony HB 782.pdf

Uploaded by: Dana Stein

Position: FAV

DANA M. STEIN
Legislative District 11B
Baltimore County

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SPEAKER PRO TEM
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Environment and Transportation
Committee

Subcommittees

Chair, Environment

Natural Resources,
Agriculture and Open Space



The Maryland House of Delegates
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The Maryland House of Delegates
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Delegate Dana Stein Testimony in Support of HB 782
Vehicle Laws-Lighting-Privately Owned Vehicles

The Fire Police are volunteer fire department members who assist local volunteer fire companies. They report to the local Sheriff, and they can be called upon to assist with many different emergencies, from traffic control to looking for lost people. They provide a vital service to direct traffic at emergencies.

There are 365 volunteer fire/EMS/Rescue companies in the State of Maryland.

In 2023, there were 45 first responders (including law enforcement officers, safety service patrol operators, fire/EMS personnel, tow truck operators, and road service technicians) struck and killed in Maryland, and there have been 7 so far in 2024.

This bill would allow the volunteer Fire Police to use green LED lights on their vehicles can improve their visibility, especially in low light or poor weather conditions.

Red and Green *or* Red and White lights improved visibility and can enhance roadway safety at emergency scenes and differentiate between Fire Police and law enforcement vehicles.

Currently, these volunteers are only allowed to use red lights, which can blend into the background during emergencies.

Yet, the State of Maryland has recognized the effectiveness of green lights and have added the use of green lights, along with amber lights, to highway maintenance and service equipment. In addition to Maryland, Michigan, Texas, Missouri, and Wisconsin have added green lights to their state highway equipment.

There have also been studies that suggest that humans can differentiate more shades of green than any other color, because they have a longer wavelength than other colors, allowing them to penetrate through fog and other weather conditions more effectively, which enhances their visibility.

This bill would have no fiscal impact on the State.

I hope you will vote favorably on HB 782.

MSFA Favorable Testimony HB0782.pdf

Uploaded by: Joel McCrea

Position: FAV

MARYLAND STATE FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Representing the Volunteer Fire, Rescue and Emergency Medical Services Personnel



Joel C. McCrea

Past President 2021 - 2022

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Environment and Transportation Committee

Delegate Marc Korman; Chair

Delegate Regina T. Boyce; Vice Chair

Room 251

House Office Building

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 23, 2024

Greetings from the Maryland State Firemen's Association ("MSFA"). As a Past President and current member of the MSFA Legislative Committee, I am pleased to offer my testimony in support of House Bill 0782. The safety of our 1st responders is a top priority and the proposed changes provided by this bill will provide for the safety of our volunteers by allowing them to be more visible as they perform their duties.

The MSFA represents over 350 volunteer fire, EMS, and rescue companies with about 28,000 members in the State of Maryland. These men and women that volunteer at the fire, EMS, and rescue companies provide a vital service to their communities. They are called upon at all hours of the day and night to respond to the emergencies and needs of others.

Currently, each volunteer fire company can have up to five of their officers display red lights on their private vehicles while on route to or at the scene of an emergency. HB0782 will allow red, or **red and white** lights or signal devices. Contrasting lights have been proven to be more visible and are consistent with the lights used on fire and EMS response vehicles.

Many communities in the State rely on volunteers to respond to fire, EMS and rescue emergencies. A number of these communities have volunteer fire police that respond in their own private vehicles to help direct traffic at the scene of an emergency. Fire police are currently allowed to have red lights displayed on their vehicles while at the scene. HB0782 would allow the fire police to have red, **red and green**, or **red and white** to help make them more visible while at the scene of an emergency.

Not all communities utilize fire police, but for those communities that do, the fire police provide a vital service at the scene of an emergency to help drivers navigate around the incident and to protect the 1st responders at the scene. The current red lights alone may not have the contrast or visibility to alert drivers of the presence of the fire police. Studies have shown that contrasting lights, particularly the use of green lights, have been shown to be effective. Studies suggest that humans can differentiate more shades of green than any other color. Green lights have a longer wavelength than other colors, allowing them to penetrate through fog and other weather conditions more effectively, which enhances their visibility.

The State of Maryland has recognized the effectiveness of green lights and have added the use of green lights, along with amber lights, to highway maintenance and service equipment. In addition to Maryland, the states of Michigan, Texas, Missouri, and Wisconsin have added green lights to their state highway equipment.

Responding to incidents on the highways is inherently dangerous. Nationwide, 45 responders were struck and killed in 2023, and 8 responders have been struck and killed to date in 2024.

In summary, the use of **red and green**, or **red and white** lights will help improve visibility and can enhance roadway safety at emergency scenes. Further, the lights can help differentiate between fire police and law enforcement vehicles.

We respectfully request a favorable vote on HB0782.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel C. McCrea

Joel C. McCrea

MSFA President 2021-2022

HB782.pdf

Uploaded by: Mike McKay

Position: FAV

MIKE MCKAY
Legislative District 1
Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties



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Judicial Proceedings Committee
Executive Nominations Committee

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 10, 2024

RE: Fire/EMS Coalition Support for House Bill 782

Dear Chairman Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

The Fire/EMS Coalition would like to express their support for House Bill 782: Vehicle Laws - Lighting - Privately Owned Vehicles. The bill will establish authorization for certain members of a volunteer fire company to equip their privately owned vehicles with red and green or red and white lights or signal devices.

The Fire/EMS Coalition supports House Bill 782 as it will be beneficial to public safety in Maryland as this bill would allow firefighters to respond to emergencies quickly even in their personal time. First Responders know emergencies do not happen on a 9 to 5 on-the-clock basis, allowing light devices for certain volunteer fire company personnel allows for more efficient emergency response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike McKay".

Senator Mike McKay
Representing the Appalachia Region of Maryland
Serving Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties

Voting Organizations:

Maryland Fire Chief's Association (MFCA)
Maryland State Firemen's Association (MSFA)
State Fire Marshal (OSFM)
Maryland Fire Rescue Institute (MFRI)
Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services System (MIEMMS)
Metro Fire Chief's Association
Professional Firefighters of Maryland

Our Mission Statement

The Maryland Fire/EMS Coalition unites Republicans and Democrats in support of fire/emergency services legislation that benefit all first responders. Becoming a member does not require taking positions on legislation; rather Coalition members are asked to offer support in a way that best benefits fire/emergency services in their respective Legislative Districts.

Testimony for HB 0782.pdf

Uploaded by: Robert Cumberland

Position: FAV



Maryland State Firemen's Association

Fire Police Committee

Environment and Transportation Committee

Delegate Marc Korman; Chair
Delegate Regina T. Boyce; Vice Chair
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 23, 2024

Greetings from the Maryland State Firemen's Association ("MSFA"). As a Past President Past, Co-Chair of the MSFA Fire Police Committee, I am pleased to offer my testimony in support of House Bill 0782. The safety of our 1st responders is a top priority and the proposed changes provided by this bill will provide for the safety of our volunteers by allowing them to be more visible as they perform their duties.

The MSFA represents over 350 volunteer fire, EMS, and rescue companies with about 28,000 members in the State of Maryland. These men and women that volunteer at the fire, EMS, and rescue companies provide a vital service to their communities. They are called upon at all hours of the day and night to respond to the emergencies and needs of others.

Currently, each volunteer fire company can have up to five of their officer's display red lights on their private vehicles while on route to or at the scene of an emergency. HB 0782 will allow red, or **red and white** lights or signal devices. Contrasting lights have been proven to be more visible and are consistent with the lights used on fire and EMS response vehicles.

Many communities in the State rely on volunteers to respond to fire, EMS and rescue emergencies. A number of these communities have volunteer fire police that respond in their own private vehicles to help direct traffic at the scene of an emergency. They also assist their local Police Department in traffic control and special events. Fire police are currently allowed to have red lights displayed on their vehicles while at the scene. HB 0782 would allow the fire police to have red, **red and green**, or **red and white** to help make them more visible while at the scene of an emergency.

Not all communities utilize fire police, but for those communities that do, the fire police provide a vital service at the scene of an emergency to help drivers navigate around the incident and to protect the 1st responders at the scene. The current red lights alone may not have the contrast or visibility to alert drives of the presence of the fire police. Studies have shown that contrasting lights, particularly the use of green lights, have been shown to be effective. Studies suggest that humans can differentiate more shades of green than any other color. Green lights have a longer wavelength than other colors, allowing them to penetrate through fog and other weather conditions more effectively, which enhances their visibility.

The State of Maryland has recognized the effectiveness of green lights and have added the use of green lights, along with amber lights, to highway maintenance and service equipment. In addition to Maryland, the states of Michigan, Texas, Missouri, and Wisconsin have added green lights to their state highway equipment.

Responding to incidents on the highways is inherently dangerous. Nationwide, 45 responders were struck and killed in 2023, and 10 responders have been struck and killed to date in 2024. For 2024 in January there was 4 struck by LODD deaths and in just 3 weeks in February there has been 6 struck by LODD with the last one on 2/20/2024.

On incidents on the highway your Fire Police are the advance warning as the scene of accident or major incidents that blocks the highway. With the use of the **red and green** or **red and white** lights it help them to warn the driving public of an incident.

The use of the **red and green** lights will not interfere with other operations that use green light as the Fire Police or traffic control personal will be away from the scene of the incident. This can prevent confusion on the road and help drivers quickly identify which type of emergency vehicle is on the scene.

In summary, the use of **red and green**, or **red and white** lights will help improve visibility and can enhance roadway safety at emergency scenes. Further, the lights can help differentiate between fire police and law enforcement vehicles.

We respectfully request a favorable vote on HB0782.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert "Bob" Cumberland
MSFA President 1987-1988