



Auto Consumer Alliance
13900 Laurel Lakes Avenue, Suite 100
Laurel, MD 20707

**Testimony to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
SB 840—Public Safety – Automatic License Plate Readers –
Captured Plate Data
Position: Favorable**

The Honorable Will Smith
Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Building
Annapolis, MD 21401
cc: Members, Judicial Proceedings Committee

Feb. 28, 2024

Dear Chairman Smith and Committee Members,

I'm a consumer advocate and Executive Director of Consumer Auto, a non-profit group that works to protect Maryland consumers and secure safety, transparency, and fair treatment for Maryland drivers and car buyers.

We support **SB 840** because it will modernize Maryland's rules on processing the considerable data Automatic License Plate Readers collect from drivers and add to protections for the privacy of that data.

The hundreds of license plate readers around Maryland conduct hundreds of millions of license plate scans each year – and the data is stored by the Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center. These millions of scans can be used to track in considerable detail the movement not only of vehicles but of people. That can be a powerful tool for law enforcement agencies looking for a missing vehicle or a missing or abducted individual. But it can also be used for troubling tracking purposes. It has in some cases been used by ICE to track and deport undocumented immigrants.¹ Reproductive rights advocates are also concerned that it could be used by some states to track the movement of women travelling out of state to seek abortion care.²

Existing Maryland law stipulates that the data can only be used for a legitimate law enforcement purpose but isn't entirely clear about how law enforcement may share the data. **SB 840** clarifies that the data "may not be sold for any purpose" – and, as I understand it, will likely be amended to add further protections against licensing or allowing bulk uploads of the data. Those changes should help prevent abuses of this fast-growing set of data on Maryland drivers.

We support **SB 840** and ask you to give it a FAVORABLE report.

Sincerely,
Franz Schneiderman
Consumer Auto

¹ <https://www.aclu.org/news/immigrants-rights/documents-reveal-ice-using-driver-location-data>

² <https://www.wired.com/story/license-plate-reader-alpr-surveillance-abortion/>