

testimony2024sb826ltr.pdf

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Position: FAV



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

**Testimony to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
SB 826— Vehicle Laws – Bicycles – Operation at Intersections
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. I'm also a rather avid cyclist in and around Baltimore City and Baltimore County.

We support **SB 826** because it will make Maryland's roads safer, more convenient, and more hospitable for bicyclists. That will encourage more cycling – which promotes fitness (and pleasure), helps our state move toward meeting its climate goals and works to help cut traffic congestion (and the noise, pollution, and stress it causes) -- and thus benefits even those who are annoyed by seeing cyclists on our streets.

Other than walking, it's hard to think of a form of transportation that is more environmentally friendly or affordable than cycling. Yet even in a time of climate crisis and when many people are struggling to afford the fast-rising cost of vehicles and motorized transportation, our streets have gotten more deadly for cyclists. With more and more very large vehicles that often have poor forward visibility on our streets, the number of deaths on U.S. roads among cyclists rose 38% between 2011 and 2020. ¹ In 2022, more than 850 cyclists were killed on U.S. roads and more than 50,000 were injured.²

In 2020, 26% of cyclist deaths came at an intersection³ – and every cyclist is well aware of the danger we face from cars turning or rear-ending cyclists or accelerating dangerously through intersections.

For those who don't ride, the idea that allowing bicyclists to roll through intersections with stop signs at a cautious speed improves bicycle safety might seem counter-intuitive. But cyclists have better balance when they maintain momentum. And they're more visible and more noticeable to drivers when they're in motion. And rolling through an intersection – rather than stopping and then pedaling rather hard to get started again – minimizes the time cyclists are exposed to dangerous traffic in intersections.

¹ <https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/2022-03/Bicyclist-Yield-As-Stop-Fact-Sheet-032422-v3-tag.pdf>

² <https://ncsrsafety.org/bicyclists-injured-in-motor-vehicle-crashes-2022/>

³ <https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/2022-03/Bicyclist-Yield-As-Stop-Fact-Sheet-032422-v3-tag.pdf>



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Data also confirms cyclists' experience that the "stop as yield" policy is safer as well as more efficient. When Delaware established such a rule in 2017, crashes involving cyclists at intersections with stop signs declined 23% over the following 30 months. After Idaho established such a rule in 1982, crashes declined 14.5%.⁴ Ten states and the District of Columbia now use some form of the "stop as yield" law; none of them has reported a spike in cyclist crashes or fatalities after implementing it.

Part of the reason this reform has worked so well is that it simply codifies what most cyclists already do: Proceed cautiously through stop signs when the intersection is clear and it appears safe to do so. While you may see the occasional exception, most cyclists do so cautiously indeed – because we know very well that we're highly vulnerable to much larger, faster-moving vehicles at intersection. At the same time, coming to a full stop at each stop sign on a quiet street is difficult and inefficient for cyclists – and really does not improve public safety.

Bikes are (properly) subject to most of the same rules of the road as cars and trucks. But there are obvious differences in how they function – and in the danger they pose to other road users. The "stop as yield" rule **SB 826** would establish reflects those differences in a way that makes good sense – and makes cycling both more safe and more practical.

We support SB 826 and hope you'll give it a FAVORABLE report.

Sincerely,

Franz Schneiderman
Consumer Auto

⁴ <https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/2022-03/Bicyclist-Yield-As-Stop-Fact-Sheet-032422-v3-tag.pdf>

Bikemore LOS SB0826 Bicycle Safety Yield.pdf

Uploaded by: Jed Weeks

Position: FAV



February 27, 2024

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Sent via Email

SB826 – Bicycle Operation at Intersections - Bicycle Safety Yield
Position: Favorable

Chair Smith and Members of the Committee:

Bikemore has submitted joint testimony with advocates across the state in support of SB826—the Bicycle Safety Yield.

We wanted to provide some additional testimony in support, based on questions we have seen raised since legislation introduction.

- 1) The Bicycle Safety Yield is most advantageous to less experienced riders, older and younger riders who may be less stable, and riders with disabilities that affect their balance. The safety yield allows these riders to maintain momentum and balance at intersections more frequently, reducing risk of conflict with vehicles due to instability.
- 2) The Bicycle Safety Yield also helps riders of larger, heavier bicycles like e-bikes, family bikes, cargo bikes, and adaptive/assistive bicycles. For example, my neighbor is 6'2, and has little issue starting his family bicycle with two children in the bucket. His 4'11" wife rides the same bicycle, with the same children in it to daycare. It is difficult for her to get moving at every stop, introducing delay at intersections and unpredictability.
- 3) The Bicycle Safety Yield does not change right-of-way law, as bicyclists must still yield to traffic that otherwise would have the right-of-way at a stop sign.

We have filmed a short video ([▶ Bicycle Safety Yield Overview](#)) that goes over this with real world examples and encourage you to view it.

We encourage a favorable report and passage of SB826.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jed Weeks", written over a light purple background.

Jed Weeks
Executive Director

BikeMarylandetal-FAV-SB826 Bicycle Safety Yield.pd

Uploaded by: Jon Korin

Position: FAV



SB826 – Bicycle Operation at Intersections - Bicycle Safety Yield

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

February 27, 2024

Position: Favorable

Greetings Chair and Members of the Committee

Our mission is to promote bicycling, increase safety, improve conditions, and provide a voice for bicyclists in Maryland. We partner with advocacy organizations to promote vulnerable road user safety legislation on the state and county level and work with government agencies, including police departments, to develop policy and awareness campaigns that protect the rights and well-being of bicyclists and pedestrians in Maryland.

We the undersigned represent multiple community-based organizations advocating for safe biking, walking and active transportation, submit this testimony on behalf of tens of thousands of members across the State of Maryland.

As bicycling has increased in popularity across the United States and provides many environmental, economic, and health benefits, there is a need for creating a safe transportation system which makes people the priority; using all available tools to help achieve zero injuries and fatalities on our roadways and allowing all people to get to their destinations safely. HB511 will help with this effort by authorizing cyclists to slow down and yield when appropriate during a turn or proceeding through an intersection with a stop sign.

There are currently 10 states and the District of Columbia that have “Bicycle Safety Yield” laws on their books, including several who have enacted these laws in the past few years ([NHTSA Bicyclist Stop As Yield Fact Sheet, 2022](#)). In 1982, Idaho was the first State to pass such a law, commonly known as the “Idaho Stop Law.” After Idaho adopted the law, bicyclist injuries from traffic crashes declined by 14.5% the following year ([Bicycle Safety and Choice, Meggs 2010](#)). In our neighboring state, the “Delaware Yield” led to decreases in traffic crashes involving bicyclists at stop sign intersections by 23% in the 30 months after the law’s passage ([Delaware Yield Crash Data, 2020](#)). You can view a 1 ½ minute video from Delaware at this [link](#) and a more recent video from BikeMore in Baltimore [HERE](#).

By permitting cyclists to retain a modest amount of forward momentum, the law makes it easier for drivers to see cyclists since the human mind is keenly attuned to detecting moving rather than stationary objects. And by reducing the time that cyclists are in the intersections, they are

able to enter and exit intersections more quickly than if they were required to come to a complete stop. For many people on bikes, the first few pedal strokes from a complete stop can be slow and wobbly. These laws do not negate a bicyclist's responsibility to yield to other traffic before crossing an intersection or to follow all work zone traffic rules.

2023 saw the highest number of traffic fatalities in Maryland since 2007 with approximately 600 fatalities and increasing numbers of pedestrians and cyclists. This bill will help to advance Maryland's Vision Zero goals by enhancing the safety and protection of cyclists, and have the added benefits of positively impacting our environment and promoting multi-modal and active transportation in our state. SB826 will align Maryland law with the safe practice already utilized by many cyclists.

We request that the committee support the passage of SB826.

Baltimore Bicycling Club (BBC)

Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis & Anne Arundel County (BikeAAA)

Bike Maryland

Bikemore

Bike HoCo

East Coast Greenway Alliance

Frederick Bicycle Coalition

Terps for Bike Lanes

Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA)

Worcester County Bike and Pedestrian Coalition

FAQ-HB511&SB826 Bicycle Safety Yield.pdf

Uploaded by: Jon Korin

Position: FAV



HB511 & SB826 – Bicycle Operation at Intersections - Bicycle Safety Yield

Frequently Asked Questions

February 27, 2024

Position: Favorable

What is the Bicycle Safety Yield?

The Bicycle Safety Yield permits a person riding a bike approaching a stop sign at a crossing with two or fewer travel lanes to treat the STOP sign as if it were a YIELD sign. It requires the bike rider to slow to a reasonable speed, yield to traffic in or approaching the intersection and then cross if there is no traffic in or approaching the crossing and it is safe to do so.

Why is it safer?

This enables a person riding a bike to cross at the safest possible time while the intersection is clear and get across faster, straighter and more reliably than from a standing start. A person riding a bike has no blindspots and gets clearer sight lines than a driver. Also, a moving bike rider is cognitively more visible to drivers since the human mind is more keenly attuned to detecting moving rather than stationary objects. MDOT provided a Letter of Information that supports this safe approach.

Does this permit people riding bikes to “blow through” the intersection?

Absolutely not! The person on the bike is required to slow, get clear sight lines and only cross if there is no traffic approaching or in the intersection. It is a YIELD which means the bike rider must stop if it is not clear to cross. This will align Maryland law with an established safe practice.

Has this been implemented in other states and what has been their experience?

There are currently 10 states and the District of Columbia that have “Bicycle Safety Yield” laws on their books, including several who have enacted these laws in the past few years ([NHTSA Bicyclist Stop As Yield Fact Sheet, 2022](#)). Since the NHTSA report was published, Colorado, Minnesota and D.C. have enacted such laws. In 1982, Idaho was the first State to pass such a law, commonly known as the “Idaho Stop Law.” After Idaho adopted the law, bicyclist injuries from traffic **crashes declined by 14.5%** the following year ([Bicycle Safety and Choice, Meggs 2010](#)). In our neighboring state, the “Delaware Yield” led to **decreases in traffic crashes involving bicyclists at stop sign intersections by 23%** in the 30 months after the law’s passage ([Delaware Yield Crash Data, 2020](#)).

How does this change the right-of-way rules and the “boulevard” rule?

The cyclist has a duty to YIELD. The drivers in the crossing road or "boulevard" (assuming there is no 4-way or 3-way stop) have the right of way. This is no different from a driver approaching a YIELD sign from the cross street.

What about the safety of pedestrians at the crossing?

Cyclists approaching an intersection must always yield to pedestrians and that requirement is already in Maryland transportation code. Under sec. [21-1202](#), a person riding a bike has all the rights and duties required of a driver of a vehicle under Title 21, with some exceptions (i.e., otherwise specified under code, not possible to apply to a person on a bike). Sec. 21-1202 specifically mentions that the duty to avoid collisions with pedestrians under [21-504](#) applies to people riding bicycles. Under HB511, a bike rider would also still be required to stop for a pedestrian crossing the street under [21-502](#).

What about trucks and trailers approaching the crossing on the main road?

Trucks and trailers require longer time and distance to stop or slow because of their weight. By permitting the bike rider to cross quicker, straighter and more reliably while the intersection is clear, this will reduce the probability of a crash for all vehicles, especially heavier ones.

What about ebikes, cargo bikes and disability assistive bikes?

A person riding an ebike, cargo bike or assistive bike is just as vulnerable as a person riding a conventional bike and therefore should have the same legal rights and responsibilities. In fact for some of these larger, heavier bikes, it is even more important to be able to cross at the safest time and in the safest manner - the Bicycle Safety Yield provides this.

Does this law apply at red lights?

No, this bill only applies to Stop signs. Some states have provisions to permit "Red as Stop" but this bill is confined to Stop Signs, not Red Lights.

Does this change liability if there is a crash?

The liability should be no different than in any crash involving any types of vehicles where one vehicle has a duty to yield and the other has the right of way.

How does this actually work in operation?

You can view a 1 ½ minute video from Delaware at this [link](#) and a more recent short video from Bikemore in Baltimore [HERE](#).

SB826_MDSierraClub_fav 28Feb2024.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Josh Tulkin

Position: FAV



P.O. Box 278
Riverdale, MD 20738

Committee: Judicial Proceedings
Testimony on: SB 826, Vehicle Laws - Bicycles - Operation at Intersections
Position: Support
Hearing Date: February 28, 2024

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports SB826, which would legalize the "Idaho stop" for bicyclists in Maryland. This would allow a bicyclist approaching a stop sign at certain places to cautiously make a turn or proceed through the intersection without stopping if the cyclist reduces speed at a reasonable rate and yields the right-of-way to certain vehicles.

The "Idaho stop" is currently legal in 11 states and the District of Columbia, and is endorsed by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration as a method to increase bicycle ridership and safety. SB 826 has the potential to encourage alternative modes of transportation that do not produce greenhouse gas emissions, improve the health of individuals and communities, and promote racial equity. Additionally, the "Idaho stop" facilitates cycling as it is more of an issue for cyclists to restart from a stop than a motorized vehicle. The energy needed to stop and start every block at stop signs is a real impediment to mode shift away from motorized vehicles. It is also an issue for those with physical challenges to stop and start repeatedly.

While legalizing the "Idaho stop" will not improve the safety for bicyclists as much as dedicated infrastructure will, it is a great step in accepting the physical differences that exist between a motor vehicle and a bicycle, and recognizing that special considerations should be made to different forms of transport. Similar bills passed in other states have been shown to increase the number of bicyclists on the road, as they legalize a common riding behavior, reducing the risk of police harassment, which is especially important for riders of color and riders in urban areas, who are sometimes subject to pretextual stops.

Given that nearly a quarter of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions are produced by passenger cars, promoting alternative modes of transportation should be a high priority when it comes to preventing climate change. Bicycling is an especially promising mode of transportation because it has the potential to replace a great deal of car trips. Over half of all trips made in the U.S. in 2021 were under three miles, an easy biking distance for most. Bicycling also produces social and financial benefits by fostering social cohesion and civic participation, as well as lowering healthcare costs associated with sedentary diseases. In addition, nearly half of Americans reported wishing to be able to ride their bikes more often, with the main reason stated that is preventing this from happening is concerns over their safety.

For these reasons, the Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club urges a favorable report on SB 826. In addition, we encourage the Committee to consider expanding the bill to allow bicyclists to treat red lights as stop signs (and to proceed after a stop and yielding to other traffic), a practice that is legal in five states, and would further increase ridership and rider safety.

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.

Keon Parsa
Member, Transportation Committee
keon.parsa02@gmail.com

Josh Tulkin
Chapter Director
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org

SB 826 FAV MSchweisguth Safety Stop.pdf

Uploaded by: Melissa Schweisguth

Position: FAV

Melissa A Schweisguth
Hyattsville, MD 20782 (D22)

February 27, 2024

Chair Smith and Committee Members,

Thank you for your service to Maryland. I am writing to ask that you support SB 826 to make Maryland's roadways safer for bicyclists by allowing a Bicycle Safety Stop at stop signs. Thank you Chair Smith for sponsoring this bill.

SB 826 would allow cyclists to treat stop signs as yield signs and continue moving through an intersection slowly and cautiously after ensuring it is safe to do so.

Intersections are particularly dangerous for cyclists: the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that nearly 55 percent of cycling injuries occurring at intersections. At intersections, cyclists can be hit by inattentive or aggressive drivers who are behind them, making right turns, or accelerating to try and pass on the left after stopping. As one who bikes regularly for commuting and errands in my home district of D22/Route 1 corridor, D20/Takoma Park-Silver Spring Area, and beyond, I have had too many near misses with drivers making right turns who "didn't see" me, and have had aggressive drivers try to speed around me at a stop sign when there was not room to pass due to oncoming traffic.

SB 826 would reduce these risks by allowing cyclists to yield rather than stopping completely, when it is safe to do so, because cyclists are more visible to drivers when moving and are less exposed to the risks of intersections if they can keep moving through them. Data evidence for improved safety; eight states and the District of Columbia have adopted the Bicycle Safety Stop, including Delaware, where crashes at intersections involving bicycles dropped 23 percent in the following 2.5 years. Maryland should heed such data and allow a Bicycle Safety Stop.

Bicyclists are subject to all of the same laws as drivers, though cyclists are far more vulnerable than drivers. Maryland should allow reasonable adjustments to the law to reduce cyclists' vulnerability and reduce deaths and injury at intersections. This, in turn, would increase the number of residents who are willing to cycle, reducing traffic congestion and climate impacts.

Allowing a Bicycle Safety Stop will also address racial inequities in traffic enforcement, as failing to stop is subject to a citation. In 2020, Bicycling Magazine analyzed data for police stops of cyclists in Washington, DC, Oakland and New Orleans and found that Black cyclists were disproportionately stopped relative to Whites. In DC, Blacks represented nearly 88 percent of stops despite being 46 percent of the population. Prior analyses, including one from the Department of Justice, found similar disparities in Tampa and Chicago. By removing one pretext for police interaction, SB 826 will make streets safer and more inviting to cyclists of color.

Please provide a Favorable committee report on SB 826 and support its passage in the Senate and General Assembly. Thank you for considering my comments.



Melissa A Schweisguth

2024-SB0826-Bicycle Safety Yield-T4BL-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Nicholas Marks

Position: FAV



SB 826: Bicycle Safety Yield - Authorizations and Requirements
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Terps For Bike Lanes – FAVORABLE

February 1, 2024

Chair Smith 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 SB826 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 committee report and floor vote.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Marks

President, Terps for Bike Lanes

terps4bikelanes@gmail.com

2024-SB826-Bicycle Safety Stop-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Seth Grimes

Position: FAV



SB 826: Vehicle Laws - Bicycles - Operation at Intersections
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Washington Area Bicyclist Association – FAVORABLE

February 28, 2024

Chair Smith and Committee Members,

Roadway safety is a paramount transportation concern. SB 826 would make Maryland's roadways safer for bicyclists. The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA), an advocacy organization with 1,200 Maryland members, supports the bill.

Intersections are particularly dangerous for bicyclists. 54.5% of bicyclist injuries occur at intersections, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Bicyclists are at risk of being rear-ended when stationary, 'right hooked' by turning vehicles, or sideswiped by vehicles accelerating past them after a stop. Allowing a cyclist to proceed through a Stop sign without stopping, however yielding to pedestrians and to vehicles that have the intersection right of way – what proponents call Bicycle Safety Yield – will reduce these threats, creating safer intersections and easing traffic flow for all road users.

So far, eleven states and the District of Columbia have adopted Bicycle Safety Yield, including Delaware, where reported crashes at intersections involving bicycles dropped 23% in the 30 months after the change. Maryland should join them.

Opponents say that road laws designed for motor vehicles should apply to bicyclists. In Maryland, they currently do. But there's a difference between a bike and a car or truck. Bicyclists are far more vulnerable than drivers. Allowing a bicyclist to keep rolling lessens the time they are exposed in an intersection and delaying other traffic. Bicycling becomes safer and more convenient, which in turn will encourage ridership. Drivers – and our environment, since biking is green – will share the benefit.

Finally, Bicycle Safety Yield has racial-justice implications. Failure to stop is currently grounds for a traffic citation, and we recognize the gaping racial disparities in traffic enforcement, including here in Maryland. The stats I will cite are from other areas, however. A 2015 report revealed that 73% of Tampa bicycle stops involved Black bicyclists, in a city that is only 26% Black. In Seattle, Black bicyclists were cited for helmet infractions 4 times as often as White bicyclists, prompting backlash and repeal of the longstanding law. Allowing bicycle safety stops – removing one potential pretext for police interaction – will mean safer and more welcoming streets for Maryland's Black bicyclists.

WABA urges a Favorable SB 826 committee report and Senate enactment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation.

Seth Grimes, seth.grimes@waba.org

SB0826 Bike Safety Yield - FBC FAVORABLE.pdf

Uploaded by: Shayne Boucher

Position: FAV



SB0826 – Bicycle Operation at Intersections Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Feb 28, 2024

Tom Rinker, President
Frederick Bicycle Coalition
president@bikefrederick.org

Position: Support

Greetings Chair and Members of the Committee

[Frederick Bicycle Coalition](#) represents a broad spectrum of recreational, commuter, mountain and adaptive cyclists. Our mission is to work with government, organizations, and individuals to promote increased and safe access for bicyclists and others in Frederick County. We have over 1,700 followers on Facebook.

As bicycling has increased in popularity across the United States and provides many environmental, economic, and health benefits, there is a need for creating a safe transportation system which makes people the priority; using all available tools to help achieve zero injuries and fatalities on our roadways and allowing all people to get to their destinations safely. SB0826 will help with this effort by authorizing cyclists to slow down and yield when appropriate during a turn or proceeding through an intersection.

There are currently 10 states and the District of Columbia that have Bike Safety Yield laws on their books, five of which enacted these laws in the past two years ([NHTSA Bicyclist Stop As Yield Fact Sheet, 2022](#)). In 1982, Idaho was the first State to pass such a law, commonly known as the "Idaho Stop Law." After Idaho adopted the law, bicyclist injuries from traffic crashes declined by 14.5% the following year ([Bicycle Safety and Choice, Meggs 2010](#)). In our neighboring state, the "Delaware Yield" led to decreases in traffic crashes involving bicyclists at stop sign intersections by 23% in the 30 months after the law's passage ([Delaware Yield Crash Data, 2020](#)).

By permitting cyclists to retain a modest amount of forward momentum, the law makes it easier for drivers to see cyclists since the human mind is keenly attuned to detecting moving rather than stationary objects. And by reducing the time that cyclists are in the intersections, they are able to enter and exit intersections more quickly than if they were required to come to a complete stop. These laws do not negate a bicyclist's responsibility to yield to other traffic before crossing an intersection or to follow all work zone traffic rules.

This bill will help to advance Maryland's Vision Zero goals by enhancing the safety and protection of cyclists and have the added benefits of positively impacting our environment and promoting multi-modal and active transportation in our state.

Frederick Bicycle Coalition urges a FAVORABLE SB0826 committee report and House floor vote.

SB826-Favorable-20240228-Ashurst.pdf

Uploaded by: Stephen Ashurst

Position: FAV

SB 826: Vehicle Laws - Bicycles - Operation at Intersections - FAVORABLE

February 28th, 2024

Chair Smith and Committee Members,

I support SB 826 which provides a proven safety enhancement to all road users at intersections.

As a utilitarian bicyclist, using the bicycle as transportation to the store and work, I generally choose smaller, less traveled roads when the option exists, and thus encounter stops much more frequently. Not only would this bill make bicycling safer at intersections, it would make it more efficient.

Studies have shown that after the implementation of similar laws in other states, bicycle crashes involving bicycles at intersections have dropped 14.5% in Idaho after one year (Meggs, 2010) and decreased 23% in Delaware 30 months after the Governor's signing (Bike Delaware Inc.).

This bill continues to require bicyclists to slow down, inspect the intersection, and continue to yield right-of-way to other vehicles in the intersection. What changes is a bicyclist's ability to remain on the pedals, maintain balance at a walking-like pace, and approach the intersection using all their senses (easily hearing and seeing other vehicles even before approaching intersections as opposed to drivers inside enclosed motor vehicles insulated by windows and blind spots) and then safely proceed through the intersection without a full stop. The bicyclist will be able to quickly and confidently accelerate through the intersection quickly (rather than wobble, or worse, slip off a pedal when trying to start up from a stop). SB 826 improves the safety of bicyclists by reducing the bicyclists time within the intersection.

I urge a favorable SB 826 committee report and Senate floor vote.

Thank you,

Steve Ashurst, steveashurst.md+sb826@gmail.com

SB 826 Bicycles at Intersections -- UNFAVORABLE.pd

Uploaded by: KIMBERLY EGAN

Position: UNF



MARYLAND
HORSE
COUNCIL

P.O. Box 606 | Lisbon, Maryland 21797
www.mdhorsecouncil.org

One Common Bond: The Horse
One Common Voice: The Horse Council

Testimony of the Maryland Horse Council on SB 826

Vehicle Laws – Bicycles – Operation at Intersections

Judicial Proceedings – Feb. 28, 2024

UNFAVORABLE

The Maryland Horse Council (MHC) is a membership-based trade association that represents the state-wide horse industry in Maryland. Our members include horse farms; horse related businesses; equestrian competitors; trainers; individual enthusiasts; equine-assisted therapy programs; and breed, interest, and discipline associations. We represent over 30,000 Marylanders who make their living with horses, or who just own and love them. We are a \$2.9 billion industry.¹

We oppose SB 826 on vagueness grounds, on public safety grounds, and on the grounds that there is no policy imperative – no reason -- to exempt bicyclists from Maryland’s traffic laws.

This bill would, if passed, apply to highways with two or fewer lanes, such as rural roads, which are the roads that we drive horse trailers on every day. Marylanders who are driving horse trailers need everyone else on the road to follow the traffic rules because the consequences of traffic accidents involving large animals can be fatal to drivers, passengers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and the animals they are hauling.

According to the Maryland Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (2019), highway engineers can consider a stop sign, yield sign, or no sign at all, if the general principles of yielding to a car with the right-of-way are sufficient to protect the public. When the general

¹ See American Horse Council Economic Impact Study for Maryland (2024), available at mdhorsecouncil.org/educational-resources/.



MARYLAND
HORSE
COUNCIL

principles of yielding to a car with the right-of-way are not sufficient to protect the public, however, stops signs or yield signs “should be used.” Section 2B.04.03. The decision about which sign to use, if any, is left to the safety engineer.

This bill would, if passed, override that safety engineers’ professional judgement about whether yielding to the right-of-way is sufficient to protect the public. This bill would allow bicyclists – but only bicyclists -- to roll through stop signs and revert to the general principles of yielding to the right of way despite the fact that a safety engineer has already determined that the general principles of yielding to right-of-way are not safe enough.

Moreover, this bill would, if passed, override the safety engineers’ judgement for no discernible purpose. In what situation would it be safe enough for a bicycle to roll a stop sign but not safe enough for a passenger car or livestock trailer to do the same?

In addition, this bill, if passed, would give little guidance to anyone approaching the intersection as to which rules would apply in any specific situation – it says bicycles are exempt from the traffic laws if they are going at a “reasonable rate of speed,” unless a vehicle is “near enough” to the intersection to pose immediate danger.

There is no definition of “reasonable rate of speed” for a bicyclist. Is it the posted speed limit? Is it lower than the posted speed limit and if so, by how much? Is a motorist expected to make this geometric calculation while approaching an intersection? What metrics would a motorist use? How far away from the intersection must a driver be when she decides whether the traffic laws that apply to her also apply to the bicyclist? How near to the intersection does a car need to be to assume that the bicycle is going to stop at the stop sign? How would a driver even know that a bicyclist might be exempt from the traffic laws?

There is also no definition of “near enough,” and in our experience, a bicyclist is unlikely to judge accurately how near is “near enough” for a livestock trailer. Horse trailers traveling within posted speed limits carry more forward momentum than the average motor vehicle because of the weight of the horses – the more horses, the more momentum. This means that horse trailers cannot brake, accelerate, or change lanes as quickly as a passenger car. It is often the



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case that other drivers do not appreciate that carrying live weight requires a longer stopping distance than the average car, so trailer drivers often compensate for that by leaving even more distance between them and the traffic in front of them. Car drivers and bicyclists can misinterpret that extra stopping space and assume that the distance is safer than it is. In reality, a longer stopping distance does not convert “near enough” to “safe enough” for people hauling livestock.

The risk in a livestock trailer collision is not just to the driver. Horses who are thrown forward in a trailer risk serious injury or death to themselves and the driver, and extracting horses from a wrecked trailer is a difficult, time-consuming operation. In addition, a frightened horse can get loose and create further havoc on the road.

These concerns are not hypothetical. In June 2023, a car collided with a horse trailer in Cecil County, killing a 19-year-old woman and injuring another person. A similar accident occurred in Harford County in 2013 between a pick-up truck, a horse trailer, and a fuel delivery truck. One person died and the horses had to be sedated and taken to an emergency care clinic. In April 2018, a horse died in Caroline County when a Virginia State Trooper collided with the trailer. Two horses were killed in a July 2016 wreck in Maryland after a car cut-off the truck pulling the trailer. And in 2015, a man, his dog, and three horses died in Ohio when a passenger swerved abruptly and slowed suddenly in front of the trailer.

MHC urges an unfavorable report on SB 826.

Respectfully submitted,

THE MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL
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SB0826- TSO - Bicycles - Operation at Intersection

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: INFO

February 27, 2024

The Honorable William C. Smith Jr.
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

Re: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 826 – Vehicle Laws – Bicycles – Operations at Intersections

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) offers the following information for the Committee’s consideration on Senate Bill 826.

Senate Bill 826 proposes to allow a person operating a bicycle to proceed cautiously through a stop sign at an intersection if the person reduces the speed of the bicycle and yields the right-of-way to certain vehicles. This would amend existing provisions in Maryland law that requires bicyclists to come to a complete stop at stop signs before proceeding.

MDOT’s top priority is safety. The Safe System Approach recognizes that humans are vulnerable and they also make mistakes. Senate Bill 826 encourages more people to bicycle by empowering vulnerable road users to make decisions that protect them from injury. The “Bicyclists Stop-as-Yield Fact Sheet” issued by NHTSA in March 2022 contends, “Based upon the current research and data available, these laws showed added safety benefits for bicyclists in States where they were evaluated, and may positively affect the environment, traffic, and transportation.” The Stop-as-Yield measure is an attractive approach to improving safety because it provides a high safety benefit at no cost.

Legislation similar to Senate Bill 826 has been adopted in eleven other states and the District of Columbia. Outcomes related to such provisions (also referred to as the “Idaho Stop,” the “Delaware Yield,” or a bicycle “Stop-As-Yield” maneuver) are reported to include an 88% compliance rate and to have supported strong safety benefits for bicyclists. Based on this experience, the NHTSA has issued guidance to support the adoption of such laws, noting that the practice allows bicyclists to maintain a safe but cautionary momentum through an intersection, thereby allowing them to better mitigate risks to their advantage, to increase their visibility to drivers and to reduce their exposure.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information during its deliberations of Senate Bill 826.

Respectfully submitted,

Pilar Helm
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
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