

BILL: HOUSE BILL 811
TITLE: Counties – Construction of Sidewalks and Crosswalks – Safe Alternative Routes to Public Schools
DATE: February 28, 2025
POSITION: UNFAVORABLE
COMMITTEE: House – Environment and Transportation\Ways and Means
CONTACT: Brian Dulay, MABE Government Relations Director

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all of the state's local boards of education, opposes House Bill 811. As the voice of Maryland's 24 local boards, MABE believes the principle of local governance by boards of education is fundamental to a sound system of public education. This bill imposes a local government mandate.

MABE recognizes and appreciates the intent of this legislation to identify pathways that public school students may use to travel to school using safe alternative routes. The implementation realities vary greatly from one district to another, however, and the local governance authority of boards of education in Maryland is continuously challenged by state initiatives.

House Bill 811 would impose one-size-fits-all statewide changes to local district planning and processes. MABE believes such considerations should reside with the local board and school system administration, and welcomes a reasonable balance between state guidance and local decision-making on such a major policy and operational issue. Some local district school sites in rural areas are located on expansive farmland, with no sidewalks in use for many miles, yet established bus and parent drop-off procedures have provided safe access for years. Established, regular reporting procedures and means of access analyses already address these issues at the local level.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 811.
