

HB 7: Vehicle Laws - Bicycles - Operation at Intersections
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Brendan Wray - FAVORABLE

January 28, 2025

Chair Korman and Committee Members,

I am in support of HB0007 - Vehicle Laws - Bicycles - Operation at Intersections. Roadway safety for all users is a paramount transportation concern. HB 7 would make Maryland's roadways safer for bicyclists, a critical portion of users that Maryland should seek to grow to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) if Maryland is to achieve Governor Moore's goals to reduce carbon emissions by 60 percent from 2006 levels by 2031.

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. These risks are exacerbated for women such as my wife, a bike commuter to the University of Maryland, and parents towing bike trailers with children, who take longer to accelerate from a stop. Allowing bicycle safety stops via HB 7 would 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 the Bicycle Safety Stop, including Delaware, where reported crashes at intersections involving bicycles dropped 23% in the 30 months after the change. Maryland should join them.

In Maryland, road laws designed for motor vehicles apply to bicyclists even though bicyclists are far more vulnerable than drivers in a crash. Allowing a bicyclist to keep rolling lessens the time they are exposed in an intersection and delaying other traffic. Bicycling becomes faster and more convenient, which in turn will encourage ridership. Drivers – and our environment, since biking is green – will share the benefit.

I urge a Favorable HB 7 committee report and House of Delegates floor vote.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation.

Brendan Wray
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