

Committee: Environment and Transportation

**Testimony on: HB 0422 - Vehicle Laws - Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles –
Crosswalks**

Position: Support

Hearing Date: February 6, 2025

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports HB 422. This bill would align cyclist and pedestrian rights by permitting cyclists to proceed similarly to pedestrians when a "WALK" signal is displayed, promoting safer and more predictable traffic flow.

This change would enhance traffic safety and efficiency, particularly at intersections, by reducing conflicts with motor vehicles turning on red.

In areas with heavy pedestrian and cyclist traffic, such as urban centers and school zones, allowing bicycles to follow pedestrian signals helps integrate different modes of transportation effectively. Such policies support active transportation by making cycling and other non-motorized options more accessible and convenient. Encouraging the use of bicycles and similar vehicles can reduce traffic congestion, and auto emissions.

Given that nearly 30% of greenhouse gas emissions in Maryland are produced by vehicles on our roads, promoting alternative modes of transportation is a key strategy in combatting 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. In addition, nearly half of Americans reported wishing to be able to ride their bikes more often, with the main barrier being concerns over their safety.

Establishing clear rules for crosswalk usage ensures uniform enforcement and compliance by cyclists and those using similar equipment. It helps law enforcement and transportation agencies provide better guidance and education to road users. This supports Zero Deaths Maryland, Pedestrian and Safety efforts, which states that pedestrians and bicyclists are some of the most vulnerable road users.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 422.

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