

February 7, 2025

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

RE: Letter of Support – Senate Bill 565 – Motor Vehicles - Accidents - Required Testing for Impaired Driving (Mateo's Law)

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports Senate Bill 565 as an important safety initiative.

SB 565 requires any driver involved in a motor vehicle crash resulting in the death of, or a life-threatening injury to, another person to submit to certain breath and blood tests, as directed by a police officer.

From 2018 to 2022¹, over 880 people have been killed in crashes involving an alcohol-impaired driver in Maryland. Deaths resulting from impaired driving crashes account for one-third of all roadway fatalities. Maryland strives to reduce that number by setting the goal of zero fatalities on our roadways by 2030.

Investigations often focus on “at-fault” drivers in a motor vehicle crashes, but the National Transportation Safety Board encourages states to “increase [the] collection, documentation, and reporting of blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) test results” for any driver in a fatal motor vehicle crash. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s (NHTSA) Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) further requires a BAC test for every driver involved in a fatal crash. Untested drivers result in “unknown” BACs and require the use of statistical methodology. Depending on the characteristics of the untested driver, this may result in an over- or under-estimate of persons killed in an impaired driving crash.

SB 565 will bring Maryland into alignment with national highway safety recommendations and help fill missing gaps in vital traffic records. Proper testing for impaired driving in fatal crashes will improve targeted safety campaigns and enforcement efforts to help reach the goal of zero fatalities on Maryland’s roadways.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the Committee consider this information when deliberating Senate Bill 565.

Respectfully submitted,

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¹ The most recent five-year period for which data is available.