



Committee: Judicial Proceedings Committee

Testimony on: SB 627 Vehicles Laws – Bicycles – Operation at Intersections

Position: Support

Hearing Date: February 13, 2025

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports SB 627, 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 appropriately yields the right-of-way to others.

This bill would support improved cyclist safety and visibility, increased efficiency for cyclists, and reduced cyclist-motorist conflicts. A similar bill passed in Delaware resulted in a [23% reduction in crashes involving bicycles at stop sign](#)-controlled intersections, over a 3-year period. At the same time, other crashes involving only bicycles fell 8%.

Additional research supports this bill:

- [A study of cyclists in Florida's Tampa Bay](#) area found that people riding bikes complied with general traffic rules over 87% of the time and that dangerous street design and motorists are what put cyclists at risk, not cyclist behavior.
- [A recent study by the Oregon College of Engineering](#) showed that outreach and education about bicyclist rolling stops would be useful, both for people walking and biking. Bicyclists preferred to yield rather than stop at intersections, becoming more comfortable at navigating intersections without stopping, once they learned about the law. Drivers approached the intersections more slowly than before, rather than becoming aggressive toward cyclists who they thought were breaking the law before.
- [The National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration](#) says that "there is no evidence showing bicyclist stop-as-yield laws have increased bike conflicts with other bikes or pedestrians."

Maryland's Department of Transportation has set a goal to reduce vehicle traffic (measured as vehicle miles traveled per capita) 20% by 2050 to help meet the state's targets to cut climate pollution and improve mobility. Increasing the accessibility of biking reduces tailpipe pollution by giving people more affordable and sustainable travel options.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB 627. 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. Streets are safer when traffic laws are well designed and compliance is high.

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