

SB 471_MTBMA_FAV.pdf

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January 4, 2025

Senator William Smith, Chair
Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 471 – FAVORABLE – Vehicle Laws – Motor Vehicle Administration – 3-Hour Roadway Safety Driving Education Program

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Transportation Builders and Materials Association (“MTBMA”) has been and continues to serve as the voice for Maryland’s construction transportation industry since 1932. Our association is comprised of 200 members. MTBMA encourages, develops, and protects the prestige of the transportation construction and materials industry in Maryland by establishing and maintaining respected relationships with federal, state, and local public officials. We proactively work with regulatory agencies and governing bodies to represent the interests of the transportation industry and advocate for adequate state and federal funding for Maryland’s multimodal transportation system.

SB 471 expands on the required alcohol education program for new drivers, creating the roadway safety driving education program which shall include instruction eight new topics including dangerous driving behaviors and work zone safety.

This added topic is especially important for our industry. By ensuring drivers are better informed about navigating work zones, the bill aims to reduce accidents, injuries, and fatalities in these high-risk areas. Additionally, it directly aligns with the Administration’s introduction and the General Assembly’s passage of the Road Worker Protection Act last year. Overall, SB 471 is positioned as a proactive measure to improve driver education, reduce road hazards, and ultimately make Maryland’s roadways safer for all users.

We appreciate you taking the time to consider our request for a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 471.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Sakata", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Michael Sakata
President and CEO
Maryland Transportation Builders and Materials Association

SB0471 - MVA - LOS - Vehicle Laws - Motor Vehicle

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: FAV

February 4, 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 471 - Vehicle Laws - Motor Vehicle Administration - 3-Hour Roadway Safety Driving Education Program

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports Senate Bill 471 as an important reform to improve driver education for certain Maryland driver's license applicants.

SB 471 replaces the current three (3)-hour alcohol and drug education program with a more comprehensive course that adds content focused on understanding signs, signals, pavement markings; dangerous driving behaviors; administrative penalties and sanctions; the driving record and points systems; and other relevant safety information. This added content is in addition to existing impaired and alcohol related topics that driver's license applicants in Maryland who have not previously held a license in another state or territory of the United States, but possess a valid driver's license from another country, must successfully complete before becoming licensed in Maryland.

This proposed legislation addresses shortcomings identified by the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) in existing curriculum required of new-to-country applicants. In a survey conducted by the MVA asking if course instructors found the existing curriculum adequate, over half of those surveyed indicated they did not, while 92% support expanding the topic material while keeping the course at 3-hours. Instructors further indicated added curriculum topics identified in the legislation as proposed were of particular importance in an updated curriculum to ensure new drivers are properly prepared for driving in Maryland.

The MVA supports SB 471 to better prepare drivers who have experience driving, but are not familiar with Maryland traffic rules, to be able to operate their vehicle safely in Maryland. Across the globe, the rules of the road, infrastructure design, and traffic-control devices can greatly vary, leading to confusing or dangerous situations for new-to-Maryland drivers. Stop light signals and patterns, four way stops, even driving on the right side of the road can be major differences for new Marylanders in this demographic. Updating curriculum to better prepare these individuals is an important safety update to make Maryland roads a safer and more welcoming place for everyone.

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
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In the drafting, there was a technical error in the bill as introduced. The MVA supports the forthcoming amendment to correct this and otherwise does not alter the substantive purpose of the proposed legislation.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee grant Senate Bill 471 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine E. Nizer
Administrator
Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration
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Maryland Department of Transportation
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