

February 13, 2025

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

RE: Letter of Support – Senate Bill 627 – Vehicle Laws – Bicycles – Operation at Intersections

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports Senate Bill 627 as an opportunity to enact a law that will improve convenience for bicyclists and safely promote bicycle usage.

SB 627 will make bicycling more convenient by permitting bicyclists who approach a stop sign at an intersection on certain highways to proceed through the intersection without stopping under certain circumstances. This type of operation is commonly referred to as “Stop-as-Yield” (SAY).

Alternatives to automobiles such as bicycles offer a less expensive, climate-friendly option for transportation. This bill acknowledges the unique characteristics of bicycling, which include heightened exertion while stopping and restarting the vehicle. As such, bicyclists prefer to maintain momentum while riding. Further, bicyclists benefit from an unobstructed field of vision while riding that helps them scan for and identify conflicts. These characteristics warrant some rules of the road that are specific to bicyclists. A law that recognizes these unique features will serve to promote bicycle usage and serve as a tangible sign of support for cycling.

Safety is MDOT’s top priority, and any change to the rules of the road must maintain safety for all users. SAY has been found to have safety benefits in other locations where adopted. A December 2024 study by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration of eight jurisdictions with SAY laws found such laws were associated with reduced crash rates, with reductions most prominent at suburban stop-controlled intersections like many of the highways affected by SB 627.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee grant Senate Bill 627 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine E. Nizer
Administrator
Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration
410-787-7830

Matthew Mickler
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090