

## CLEAR BEFORE YOU DRIVE ACT

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Environment + Transportation Committee

HB0474

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/>

Vehicle Laws – Dangerous Accumulations of Snow and Ice – Removal From Exposed Vehicle Surfaces  
(Clear Before You Drive Act)

I am writing to express my support for the safety goals of HB 474 (Clear Before You Drive Act).

I am a weekly commuter from Milton Delaware to Havre de Grace Maryland every Wednesday morning, returning home Thursday afternoon for the sole purpose of babysitting my grandson.

I am strongly urging an amendment to increase the penalties. The proposed \$25 fine for a first offense is insufficient to deter dangerous behavior. Given the life-threatening nature of 'flying ice' on highways like I-95 and I-97, the base fine should be high enough to ensure compliance. We shouldn't wait for a tragedy to occur before the law carries real weight.

Low Deterrent: \$25 is less than the cost of a high-quality snow brush.  
It doesn't incentivize a change in behavior for most drivers.

Comparison to Other States: For context, states like New Jersey and Pennsylvania have enacted similar laws (e.g., "Christine's Law" in PA) where fines can reach \$1,000 for just having snow on the car, regardless of whether an accident occurs.

Public Safety Cost: A single "flying ice" accident can cost the state and victims thousands in emergency response and medical bills—costs that a \$25 fine doesn't begin to offset.

Numerous accidents occurred in the state of Maryland with the recent snow and ice storm due to accumulation of ice on exposed vehicle surfaces. Two people were taken to the hospital the week of January 25th due to flying ice while crossing the Millard Tydings Memorial Bridge. Upon returning home on Thursday, 1/29, I witnessed chunks of flying ice coming off a truck while crossing the same bridge (northbound) and this was from the opposite lane (southbound.) People can attempt to steer away from these vehicles, however, sometimes the impact cannot be avoided or prevented.

We have laws to protect our road crews and these fines are heavily enforced (with cameras.) Why would we not protect our citizens (and children) in regards to a car covered in ice that can basically turn into a lethal weapon. If this act could also be more enforced by police, it would hinder some of this behavior and it could also generate additional revenue for the state that would be warranted.