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Charles County

Ways and Means Committee

*Subcommittees*

Chair, Gaming

K-12 Education

Chair, Southern Maryland  
House Delegation



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of  
HB0474 - Vehicle Laws – Dangerous Accumulations of Snow and Ice –  
Removal From Exposed Vehicle Surfaces (“Clear Before You Drive Act”)**

Good afternoon, Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee. For the record, I am Delegate Edith Patterson, sponsor of the bill titled *Vehicle Laws, Dangerous Accumulations of Snow and Ice, Removal From Exposed Vehicle Surfaces*.

Winter driving presents serious challenges, and those risks increase significantly when snow and ice are allowed to remain on vehicles. Many drivers clear only their windshields and windows, but snow and ice left on roofs, hoods, and trailers can fly off during transit. When that happens, debris can impair visibility, damage vehicles, and cause serious crashes. This bill addresses these public safety concerns.

This legislation prohibits a person from operating or towing a vehicle when snow or ice remains on exposed surfaces in a way that contributes to an accident resulting in property damage, serious bodily injury, or death. Penalties apply when actual harm occurs, or as a secondary offense, making this a specific, targeted safety measure rather than excessive enforcement.

We have worked closely with the Maryland Motor Truck Association to accommodate their concerns and have come to agreement with a few amendments to improve the legislation. We are confident that this bill now strikes a fair balance between safety and practicality.

After a preventable and tragic death caused by ice flying from a vehicle and striking another driver’s windshield, Pennsylvania enacted Christine’s Law, named in honor of the victim. Maryland has already seen incidents where flying snow and ice have led to crashes and injuries. This legislation gives us the opportunity to act before a life is lost here. We should not wait for a tragedy to force our hand or for this bill to carry the name of another Marylander taken too soon. Taking action now will improve roadway safety during winter weather and help prevent needless loss of life.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask for a favorable report on HB0474.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Edith Patterson, Charles County

