

February 26, 2026

The Honorable Marc Korman  
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee  
250 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

***Re: Letter of Information – House Bill 591 – Wicomico County – Highway Pedestrian Safety Act***

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 591 and offers the following letter of information for the Committee’s consideration.

HB 591 prohibits a person in Wicomico County from standing in a roadway, a shoulder, a median divider, or an intersection determined to be “inherently dangerous” and prohibits a police officer from issuing citations for violations unless the location has signs installed prohibiting standing.

The State Highway Administration (SHA) understands that a person standing in a roadway poses various risks and recognizes that this is a serious public safety challenge. Soliciting in roadways, median dividers, and intersections is already prohibited in several jurisdictions under § 21-507 of the Transportation article. Adding Wicomico County to this section is a more direct means to achieve the goals of this legislation.

The SHA is unclear on the type of signage required by the bill. It should be noted that “No Solicitation” signs are not covered or regulated by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) as required by the bill. “No Solicitation” signs are not traffic control devices designed to regulate vehicle or pedestrian traffic on streets and highways. Further, signage reading “No Peds” or “No Standing” may not be appropriate and would cause confusion for highway users if pedestrian amenities (crosswalks, Accessible Pedestrian Signals, Countdown Pedestrian Signals) are present at the location. Furthermore, the installation of additional signage could reduce motorists’ focus on critical regulatory, warning, and guide signs.

Furthermore, the SHA requests additional clarification to ensure that the installation of this signage is the responsibility of the local jurisdiction. SHA is concerned that the ambiguity could lead to disputes over who is the responsible party for signage installation. To the extent that the responsibility is on the County and the County submits permit requests for installation of signage on State-owned right-of-way, the SHA will incur additional expenditures for the review, right-of-way evaluation, and issuance of the appropriate permit. If the intent of the bill is for SHA to install signage, it should be noted that SHA is not currently funded to design, fabricate and install the subject signage. Therefore, SHA would incur unfunded costs.

The SHA also notes that the language used in HB 591 – specifically, the use of “inherently dangerous” - is ambiguous and could have unintended complications on roadway safety. At certain locations, the crash data may not support the assumption that the road is “inherently dangerous”.

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Therefore, it is unclear how a determination would be made in compliance with State and federal traffic engineering guidance and best practices.

The Maryland State Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information during their deliberations of House Bill 591.

Respectfully submitted,

April Moeller  
Director  
Office of Government Affairs  
Maryland State Highway Administration  
410-210-5780

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