

HB 474 -ClearBeforeYouGo Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Andrea Mansfield

Position: FAV



Towing & Recovery Professionals of Maryland

P.O Box 905 * Huntingtown, Maryland 20639

410-414-5406 * 1-800-244-0102 * Fax 410-414-5408

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Marc Korman, Chair and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Vince Flook, President, Towing & Recovery Professionals of Maryland
Will Cain, 1st Vice President, Towing & Recovery Professionals of Maryland

DATE: February 19, 2026

RE: **HB 474 - Vehicle Laws - Dangerous Accumulations of Snow and Ice - Removal From Exposed Vehicle Surfaces (Clear Before You Drive Act)**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

The Towing Recovery Professionals of Maryland (TRPM) **SUPPORT** HB 474, which prohibits a person from operating or towing a vehicle without removing accumulated snow and ice from exposed vehicle surfaces. It also provides for enhanced penalties if a violation causes a property damage, serious bodily injury, or death.

Towing and recovery operators are among the first to arrive on the scene of crashes caused by snow and ice dislodging from vehicles. We see firsthand the devastating results of accumulated snow and ice flying from a vehicle's roof, hood, trailer, or cab and striking another motorist. The results include shattered windshields, multivehicle collisions, serious bodily injury, and even, in the worst instances, fatalities.

HB 474 is a common-sense safety bill. A driver already has the responsibility to ensure their vehicles and loads are secure. Just as towing and recovery professionals must properly secure every vehicle to a tow apparatus before transporting it, every driver should ensure that snow or ice does not detach and endanger others.

For these reasons, the Towing Recovery Professionals of Maryland (TRPM) **SUPPORT** HB 474 and urge a favorable committee report.

Testimony HB0747 4.pdf

Uploaded by: George Clark

Position: FAV

Environment and Transportation Committee

02/17/2026

Good afternoon, Chairman Korman, Vice-Chair Guyton, Delegate Patterson, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee. My name is George Clark, and I am here as a life-long resident of Maryland, and for the record, I serve as the Transportation Director for the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland. I am here today to testify in strong support of House Bill 0474, the 'Clear Before You Drive Act'.

In Southern Maryland, our commuters rely on high-speed regional arteries where “ice missiles” - large sheets of ice flying off uncleared vehicles - pose a severe and often unpredictable threat. HB 0474 addresses a critical gap in our vehicle laws by requiring drivers to remove snow and ice from exposed surfaces, including hoods, roofs, and trailers, before driving on the road.

We have had 3 serious crashes from the snow/ice storm this year: one in Anne Arundel County (involving a Police Officer), one in Harford County, and one in St Mary's County, and many more I am sure that go unreported. There is no information on the crash report database that clearly addresses serious injury/fatal/property damage due to ice/snow falling off one vehicle and hitting another, kept by MDOT/MVA Highway Safety Office.

This legislation is balanced and fair. It classifies the simple failure to clear a vehicle as a secondary offense. This ensures that the primary focus is on public education and voluntary compliance rather than unnecessary traffic stops. However, it rightly shifts to primary enforcement when negligence leads to real-world harm.

Critically, this bill establishes significant penalties when a failure to clear a vehicle contributes to accidents resulting in property damage, serious injury, or death:

Noncommercial Vehicles: Fines between \$200 and \$1,000.

Commercial Vehicles: Fines are between \$500 and \$1,500.

As a transportation official, I believe these tiered fines for commercial and noncommercial operators reflect the varying levels of risk these vehicles pose to the traveling public.

In closing, I would state that public safety on our highways should not be left to chance during winter weather. By enacting this standard, we protect Maryland drivers from preventable tragedies. On behalf of the Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland, I urge a favorable report on HB 0474. Thank you for allowing me to speak on behalf of this important legislation.

George Clark
9720 Huntley Drive
La Plata, MD, 20646
301-643-7257

SafeRoadsMD Supports HB 474.pdf

Uploaded by: John Seng

Position: FAV



SafeRoadsMD

PLEASE SUPPORT HB 474
“Clear Before You Drive Act”

MARYLAND COALITION FOR ROADWAY SAFETY, INC.
URGES MD HOUSE ENT COMMITTEE SUPPORT FOR HB 474

February 17, 2026

TO:

Honorable Delegate Marc Korman, Chair
Honorable Delegate Michele Guyton, Vice Chair
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Maryland General Assembly
250 & 251 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

FROM:

John Seng, Chair
SafeRoadsMD - Maryland Coalition for Roadway Safety, Inc.
(202) 468-7682, JSeng@SafeRoadsMD.org
SafeRoadsMD.org

Subj: Support of HB 474 “Clear Before You Drive Act”

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton and Members of the Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee,

On behalf of SafeRoadsMD, I respectfully request your favorable report on House Bill 474, the “Clear Before You Drive Act.”

This common-sense legislation addresses a significant and preventable roadway safety hazard: snow and ice left on vehicles that can dislodge while driving and injure other motorists, law enforcement, and emergency responders. We saw this danger play out in Maryland this winter.

- In late January, a large sheet of ice flew off a vehicle on Interstate 97 in Anne Arundel County, shattering the windshield of a sheriff’s cruiser and injuring a deputy who required medical treatment before being released from the hospital. At least two other Maryland motorists were also hurt when chunks of ice struck their windshields while driving this same week. ([WBAL](#))
- In Havre de Grace, a substantial piece of ice crashed through a windshield on I-95 northbound, sending two people to the hospital. ([WBFF](#))

These are not isolated anecdotes, but part of multiple similar incidents reported across Maryland following recent snow and ice events. They illustrate how snow and ice that may seem harmless can become dangerous “ice missiles” at highway speeds — causing injury, property damage, and potential secondary collisions.

Maryland Coalition for Roadway Safety, Inc.
2127 Regina Terrace, Clarksburg, MD 20871 (202) 468-7682

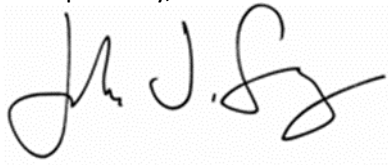
House Bill 474 would help prevent these incidents by requiring drivers to remove accumulated snow and ice from all exposed vehicle surfaces, including roofs, windshields, windows, hoods, and tops of trailers, before operating or towing a vehicle if the accumulation poses a threat. The bill wisely allows enforcement as a secondary action, minimizing enforcement burden while encouraging compliance. It pairs modest graduated fines with stronger penalties only when failure to clear snow or ice contributes to a crash involving significant property damage, serious injury, or death.

This approach reinforces personal responsibility and aligns Maryland with other states that have recognized the public safety benefit of similar laws.

Clearing snow and ice from a vehicle requires just a few minutes of effort. But as these recent Maryland incidents show, the consequences of not doing so can be severe and costly. House Bill 474 would help protect Marylanders from harm that is both foreseeable and preventable.

For these reasons, SafeRoadsMD strongly urges a favorable report on House Bill 474. Thank you for your leadership and for your consideration of this important safety measure.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John J. Seng". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being the most prominent.

John J. Seng
Chair
Maryland Coalition for Roadway Safety, Inc.

cc: SafeRoadsMD Board

Letter of Support for HB0474.pdf

Uploaded by: Mike McKay

Position: FAV

MIKE MCKAY
Legislative District 1
Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties



Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 416
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3565
800-492-7122 Ext. 3565
Mike.McKay@senate.maryland.gov

Judicial Proceedings Committee
Executive Nominations Committee

Cumberland Office
100N Mechanic Street
Cumberland, Maryland 21502
240-362-7040

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Joint Committees
Administrative, Executive,
and Legislative Review
Children, Youth, and Families
Program Open Space and Agricultural
Land Preservation

Williamsport Office
2N Conococheque Street
Williamsport Town Hall
Williamsport, Maryland

February 10, 2026

RE: Fire/EMS Coalition Support for HB0474

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Members of the Committee,

The Fire/EMS Coalition would like to express their support for **House Bill 474: Vehicle Laws - Dangerous Accumulations of Snow and Ice - Removal From Exposed Vehicle Surfaces**. This bill will prohibit a person from operating or towing a vehicle without removing from exposed vehicle surfaces accumulated snow and ice; and prohibit a person from committing a violation of the Act that contributes to an accident resulting in property damage or the death of or serious bodily injury to another person.

The Fire/EMS Coalition supports House Bill 474.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Mike McKay'.

Senator Mike McKay
Representing the Appalachia Region of Maryland
Serving Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties

Voting Organizations:

Maryland Fire Chief's Association (MFCA)
Maryland State Firefighter's Association (MSFA)
State Fire Marshal (OSFM)
Maryland Fire Rescue Institute (MFRI)
Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services System (MIEMMS)
Metro Fire Chief's Association
Professional Firefighters of Maryland

Our Mission Statement

The Maryland Fire/EMS Coalition unites Republicans and Democrats in support of fire/emergency services legislation that benefit all first responders. Becoming a member does not require taking positions on legislation; rather Coalition members are asked to offer support in a way that best benefits fire/emergency services in their respective Legislative Districts.

P HB474 Snow and Ice Accumulation.pdf

Uploaded by: Mindy Badin

Position: FAV

Please Support House Bill 474
Vehicle Laws - Dangerous Accumulations of Snow and Ice -
Removal From Exposed Vehicle Surfaces (Clear Before You Drive Act)

February 19, 2026

To:

Honorable Delegate Marc Korman, Chair
Honorable Delegate Michele Guyton, Vice Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee
Maryland General Assembly
Taylor House Office Building, Room 250
Annapolis, MD 21401

From:

Mindy Badin
4212 Charley Forest Street
Olney, MD 20832
minbadoo1@yahoo.com

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Members of the Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee:

I respectfully urge a favorable report on House Bill 474, which would prohibit a person from operating or towing a vehicle without first removing accumulated snow and ice from exposed vehicle surfaces.

Snow and ice dislodging from moving vehicles behave like projectiles and create a dangerous roadway hazard; serious injuries and deaths have occurred because of this hazard. Sheets of ice and compacted snow ("ice missiles") can strike following vehicles, at best obstructing driver visibility, at worst causing serious collisions. These incidents place everyone at unnecessary risk.

House Bill 474, if passed into law, will promote prevention rather than punishment. It will prevent avoidable crashes and injuries, and promote responsible vehicle operation. Drivers are already expected to maintain clear windshields and functional lights; clearing accumulated snow and ice is another reasonable safety obligation.

Several other states, including New Hampshire, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, have passed “ice missile” laws which require removal of snow and ice from vehicle roofs, hoods, trunks, and windows. These states have recognized the dangers of these frozen projectiles on roadway users. Maryland needs to join these states in ensuring the safety of its residents.

In Maryland, winter weather is inevitable; preventable harm is not. By passing House Bill 474, we can take a practical, common-sense approach to reduce roadway hazards and protect all people using our Maryland roadways.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on House Bill 474.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mindy Badin

HB0474 Patricia Westervelt MDOT FAV

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: FAV

February 19, 2026

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

RE: Letter of Support – House Bill 474 – Vehicle Laws – Dangerous Accumulations of Snow and Ice – Removal from Exposed Vehicle Surfaces (Clear Before You Drive Act)

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) offers the following letter of support for the Committee's consideration of House Bill 474.

HB 474 prohibits a person from operating or towing a vehicle without removing accumulated snow and ice that poses a threat to persons or property from exposed surfaces and prohibits a person from committing a violation that may contribute to a crash resulting in property damage or the injury or death of another person.

The State Highway Administration (SHA) supports the Clear Before You Drive Act as it addresses a critical public safety need on Maryland's roadways. As we have seen in recent weeks, flying ice shattered the windshield of a sheriff deputy's cruiser on I-97 in Anne Arundel County, and two people in Harford County were hospitalized when ice smashed through their windshield on I-95.

Additionally, snow debris from moving vehicle surfaces limits visibility for other drivers, contributing to crashes. Uncleared vehicles also significantly contribute to secondary accumulation on roadways, making it more challenging for winter maintenance crews to achieve bare pavement and resulting in dangerous localized icy areas on roadways.

These incidents pose serious threats to highway users and all Marylanders. Currently, driving with snow-covered vehicle surfaces is not explicitly illegal unless it obstructs the driver's visibility. The Motor Vehicle Administration's Maryland Driver's Manual currently contains information on driving in snowy and icy conditions. Drivers are taught to ensure not only their windshield and headlights are clear, but to clear the entire vehicle of snow and ice before they begin vehicle operation on roadways. HB 474 codifies this guidance in law, improves safety for highway users, and holds motorists accountable for snow and ice accumulation on their vehicles.

The Honorable Marc Korman
Page Two

HB 474 is a common-sense measure that encourages personal responsibility and prevents avoidable roadway tragedies. For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the committee consider this information during its deliberations and issue House Bill 474 a favorable report.

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

AAA FINAL Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 474 - snow an

Uploaded by: Ragina Ali

Position: FAV



**AAA Mid-Atlantic's Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 474
Vehicle Laws - Dangerous Accumulations of Snow and Ice –
Removal From Exposed Vehicle Surfaces
(Clear Before You Drive Act)**

Sponsors: Delegates Patterson, Korman, Harrison and Turner

- AAA Mid-Atlantic **supports HB 474 the “Clear Before You Drive Act.”**
- While most drivers clear their windshield and back window of snow and ice, for their own visibility, all too often, they don't clear the roof, hood and or trunk of their vehicles.
- HB 474 strives to change this dangerous behavior, by making it illegal to drive without *“making reasonable efforts to remove from exposed vehicle surfaces accumulated snow and ice.”*
- The bill holds drivers accountable whose failure to remove snow and ice contributes to a crash causing death, serious bodily injury or property damage.
- At highway speeds, even a small sheet of ice can become a dangerous projectile, shattering windshields, causing drivers to lose control, and triggering chain-reaction crashes.
- With last month's snow and ice storm in Maryland, there were at least two incidents that were reported by news outlets, where drivers and/or their passengers were injured as a result of ice falling onto their vehicles.
- In Harford County, two people were injured when their car's windshield was shattered by ice, causing the driver to lose control on the Tydings Bridge on I-95.
- In Anne Arundel County, the windshield of a deputy's police car was smashed when ice struck it, requiring the deputy to be hospitalized with minor injuries.
- AAA believes that HB 474 will reduce serious crashes caused by snow or ice becoming dislodged from motor vehicles and will save lives, protecting drivers and all road users.
- As a matter of safety, courtesy, and common sense, AAA respectfully requests a favorable report for **HB 474**.

Contacts:

*Ragina C. Ali, AAA Club Alliance
Public and Government Affairs Manager
443.465.5020*

*Marty Lostrom, GS Proctor & Associates
Associate
202.368.3859*

Testimony in support of HB0474 - Clear Before You

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

HB0474_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

02/19/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON HB#/0474 - POSITION:
FAVORABLE

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

TO: Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB#/0474, Vehicle Laws - Dangerous Accumulations of Snow and Ice - Removal From Exposed Vehicle Surfaces (Clear Before You Drive Act)

Driving home from Annapolis on February 3rd, 2026 on US 70 my car windshield was almost struck by a piece of ice from the roof of a truck in front of me. It hit the road directly in front of my car.

As reported by WBAL TV *Ice flying off cars injures 3 in Maryland, prompting safety reminders*¹

Ice flying off cars injured at least three people in Maryland, including an Anne Arundel County sheriff's deputy, prompting leaders to remind drivers to clear snow and ice from their vehicles to prevent further accidents.

A large chunk of ice flew off another vehicle and hit a deputy's car on Interstate 97 Wednesday [January 21, 2026] morning, leaving the patrol car with a busted windshield and ice inside.

It is incumbent on Maryland to prevent such accidents and this bill will offer a path to doing that.

This bill meets that goal by prohibiting a person from operating or towing a vehicle without removing from exposed vehicle surfaces accumulated snow and ice; and prohibiting a person from committing a violation of the Act that contributes to an accident resulting in property damage or the death of or serious bodily injury to another person.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/0474.

¹ <https://www.wbalv.com/article/officer-injured-windshield-smashed-sliding-ice-other-vehicle/70171805>

HB474 testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Robert Phillips

Position: FAV

MARYLAND STATE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

-a 501(c)(3) organization

Representing the Volunteer Fire, Rescue and Emergency Medical Services Personnel



Legislative Committee

17 State circle

Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair: Chief Robert Phillips

Office: 410-974-2222

Cell: 443-205-5030

Email: rfcchief48@gmail.com

HB474: Vehicle Laws - Dangerous Accumulations of Snow and Ice - Removal From Exposed Vehicle Surfaces (Clear Before You Drive Act)

My name is Chief Robert Phillips, and I am the Legislative Committee Chair for the Maryland State Firefighters Association (MSFA)

I wish to present testimony in FAVOR of **House Bill 474: Vehicle Laws - Dangerous Accumulations of Snow and Ice - Removal From Exposed Vehicle Surfaces (Clear Before You Drive Act)**

The MSFA is fully in favor of this bill. For the most part this is a no nonsense bill. As first responders our members have many times seen the effects of snow flying off of a vehicle and causing other drivers to have to make hasty decisions that may or may not work. This bill will assist with some of these situations being eliminated and making the roads a safer place to travel on. Our members have had equipment such as engines, trucks and ambulances damaged by ice and snow coming from other vehicles.

The MSFA asks that you return a **FAVORABLE** vote on **HB474**.

Thank you and I would be glad to answer any questions you might have.

Respectfully

HB0474 Patterson Amendments

Uploaded by: Edith Patterson

Position: FWA



HB0474/643429/1

AMENDMENTS
PREPARED
BY THE
DEPT. OF LEGISLATIVE
SERVICES

17 FEB 26
10:23:02

BY: Delegate Patterson

(To be offered in the Environment and Transportation Committee)

AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL 474

(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 1, in line 5, after “vehicle” insert “, subject to certain exceptions.”; and in line 6, strike “removing” and substitute “making reasonable efforts to remove”.

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 2, in line 9, strike “A” and substitute “**(I) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBPARAGRAPH (II) OF THIS PARAGRAPH, A**”; in line 10, strike “REMOVING” and substitute “**MAKING REASONABLE EFFORTS TO REMOVE**”; and after line 11, insert:

“(II) THE PROHIBITION UNDER SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF THIS PARAGRAPH DOES NOT APPLY IF COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROHIBITION WOULD:

1. CAUSE THE OPERATOR OF THE VEHICLE TO VIOLATE ANY LAW OR REGULATION REGARDING WORKPLACE SAFETY; OR

2. THREATEN THE HEALTH OR SAFETY OF THE OPERATOR OF THE VEHICLE.”.

On page 3, after line 5, insert:

“(III) 1. EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSUBPARAGRAPH 2 OF THIS SUBPARAGRAPH, EACH DAY THAT A VIOLATION OCCURS OR CONTINUES IS A SEPARATE VIOLATION OF PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION.

2. A PERSON MAY NOT BE FOUND TO HAVE VIOLATED PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION MORE THAN ONCE IN ANY 24-HOUR PERIOD.

Hb0474 Patterson Final Reprint

Uploaded by: Edith Patterson

Position: FWA

HOUSE BILL 474

R5

6lr0831
CF 6lr1678

By: **Delegates Patterson, Korman, Harrison, and Turner**
Introduced and read first time: January 23, 2026
Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

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

5 FOR the purpose of prohibiting a person from operating or towing a vehicle, subject to certain
6 exceptions, without
7 ~~removing~~ making reasonable efforts to remove from exposed vehicle surfaces accumulated
8 snow and ice; prohibiting a
9 person from committing a violation of this Act that contributes to an accident
10 resulting in property damage or the death of or serious bodily injury to another
11 person; and generally relating to the removal of snow and ice from exposed vehicle
12 surfaces.

11 BY adding to
12 Article – Transportation
13 Section 21–1135
14 Annotated Code of Maryland
15 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

16 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
17 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

18 **Article – Transportation**

19 **21–1135.**

20 **(A) IN THIS SECTION, “EXPOSED VEHICLE SURFACE” INCLUDES FOR A**
21 **VEHICLE:**

22 **(1) THE HOOD;**

23 **(2) THE TRUNK;**

- 1 (3) THE WINDSHIELD;
- 2 (4) EACH WINDOW;
- 3 (5) THE ROOF;
- 4 (6) THE CAB OF A COMMERCIAL OR NONCOMMERCIAL TRUCK; AND
- 5 (7) THE TOP OF:

6 (I) A TRAILER OR SEMITRAILER BEING TOWED BY A MOTOR
7 VEHICLE; AND

8 (II) A COMMERCIAL TRAILER OR SEMITRAILER.

9 (B) (1) ~~A (I)~~ EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBPARAGRAPH (II) OF THIS PARAGRAPH, A
PERSON MAY NOT OPERATE OR TOW A VEHICLE WITHOUT
10 ~~REMOVING~~ MAKING REASONABLE EFFORTS TO REMOVE FROM EXPOSED VEHICLE SURFACES, BEFORE OPERATION
OR TOWING,
11 ACCUMULATED SNOW AND ICE THAT POSES A THREAT TO PERSONS OR PROPERTY.

(II) THE PROHIBITION UNDER SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF THIS PARAGRAPH
DOES NOT APPLY IF COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROHIBITION WOULD:

1. CAUSE THE OPERATOR OF THE VEHICLE TO VIOLATE ANY LAW OR
REGULATION REGARDING WORKPLACE SAFETY; OR

2. THREATEN THE HEALTH OR SAFETY OF THE OPERATOR OF THE
VEHICLE.

12 (2) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION, A
13 POLICE OFFICER MAY ENFORCE PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION ONLY AS A
14 SECONDARY ACTION WHEN THE POLICE OFFICER DETAINS A DRIVER OF A MOTOR
15 VEHICLE FOR A SUSPECTED VIOLATION OF ANOTHER PROVISION OF THE CODE.

16 (3) (I) A PERSON WHO IS CONVICTED OF A VIOLATION OF
17 PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION WHILE OPERATING OR TOWING A
18 NONCOMMERCIAL VEHICLE IS SUBJECT TO:

- 19 1. FOR A FIRST OFFENSE, A FINE OF \$25;
- 20 2. FOR A SECOND OFFENSE, A FINE OF \$50;
- 21 3. FOR A THIRD OFFENSE, A FINE OF \$100; AND
- 22 4. FOR A FOURTH OR SUBSEQUENT OFFENSE, A FINE OF
23 \$200.

24 (II) A PERSON WHO IS CONVICTED OF A VIOLATION OF
25 PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION WHILE OPERATING OR TOWING A
26 COMMERCIAL VEHICLE IS SUBJECT TO:

- 27 1. FOR A FIRST OFFENSE, A FINE OF \$75;

3 REPRINT OF HOUSE BILL 474 as amended by HB0474/643429/1 02/17/26 at 10:22 AM

- 1 2. FOR A SECOND OFFENSE, A FINE OF \$150;
- 2 3. FOR A THIRD OFFENSE, A FINE OF \$300;
- 3 4. FOR A FOURTH OFFENSE, A FINE OF \$600; AND
- 4 5. FOR A FIFTH OR SUBSEQUENT OFFENSE, A FINE OF
- 5 \$1,000.

(III) 1. EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSUBPARAGRAPH 2 OF THIS SUBPARAGRAPH, EACH DAY THAT A VIOLATION OCCURS OR CONTINUES IS A SEPARATE VIOLATION OF PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION.

2. A PERSON MAY NOT BE FOUND TO HAVE VIOLATED PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION MORE THAN ONCE IN ANY 24-HOUR PERIOD.

6 (C) (1) A PERSON MAY NOT COMMIT A VIOLATION OF SUBSECTION (B)(1)
7 OF THIS SECTION THAT CONTRIBUTES TO AN ACCIDENT THAT RESULTS IN
8 PROPERTY DAMAGE OR THE DEATH OF OR, AS DEFINED IN § 20-102 OF THIS
9 ARTICLE, SERIOUS BODILY INJURY TO ANOTHER PERSON.

10 (2) A PERSON WHO IS CONVICTED OF A VIOLATION OF PARAGRAPH (1)
11 OF THIS SUBSECTION IS SUBJECT TO:

12 (I) FOR A VIOLATION THAT OCCURRED WHILE OPERATING OR
13 TOWING A NONCOMMERCIAL VEHICLE, A FINE OF NOT LESS THAN \$200 AND NOT
14 MORE THAN \$1,000; OR

15 (II) FOR A VIOLATION THAT OCCURRED WHILE OPERATING OR
16 TOWING A COMMERCIAL VEHICLE, A FINE OF NOT LESS THAN \$500 AND NOT MORE
17 THAN \$1,500.

18 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
19 October 1, 2026.

Hb0474 Patterson Photos FAV

Uploaded by: Edith Patterson

Position: FWA

on Interstate 97

This morning, one of our deputies was traveling on Interstate 97 when a large sheet of ice slid off another vehicle and struck his windshield, causing it to shatter. Despite the impact, the deputy was able to maintain control of his cruiser and safely drive it to the Millersville shop. He was transported to BWMC and treated for minor injuries.

This incident serves as an important reminder to all motorists: please fully clear snow and ice from your vehicles before driving. Ice becoming airborne can cause serious damage and injuries to others on the roadway. Your extra few minutes can prevent a dangerous situation.



HB0474 Patterson Snow Removal.pdf

Uploaded by: Edith Patterson

Position: FWA

EDITH J. PATTERSON, ED.D.
Legislative District 28
Charles County

Ways and Means Committee

Subcommittees

Chair, Gaming

K-12 Education

Chair, Southern Maryland
House Delegation



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 429
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3247
800-492-7122 Ext. 3247
Edith.Patterson@house.maryland.gov

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

CLEAR BEFORE YOU DRIVE ACT.pdf

Uploaded by: Elaine Orbino

Position: FWA

CLEAR BEFORE YOU DRIVE ACT

Submitted by Elaine Orbino
100 Summerwalk Boulevard
Milton DE 19968

Tuesday 2/17

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.

HB474 - Support with Amendments - Maryland Motor T

Uploaded by: Louis Campion

Position: FWA



HEARING DATE: February 19, 2026

BILL NO/TITLE: HB474: Vehicle Laws - Dangerous Accumulations of Snow and Ice - Removal From Exposed Vehicle Surfaces (Clear Before You Drive Act)

COMMITTEE: House Environment & Transportation

POSITION: **Support with Amendments**

During the winter months snow and ice accumulates on the tops of all vehicles, including cars, trucks, trailers and buses. This accumulation of snow and ice potentially causes serious safety issues. During transit ice may dislodge from a vehicle, potentially causing property damage to other vehicles and injuring other motorists.

Unlike passenger cars, there are numerous challenges with removing snow and ice from large commercial vehicles. These include:

- Worker safety – there is substantial potential for a serious workers compensation injury or death due to slippage if a driver climbs on top of a truck or trailer. This also opens up numerous OSHA concerns.
- There are a lack of options available to remove snow and ice. Maryland has thousands of trucks and trailers registered in the state, not counting the thousands of vehicles that deliver or pass through from out of state. There will never be enough drive through scrapers, truck washes, etc. to accommodate the number of commercial vehicles on the road.
- Snow rakes or brooms are not effective for ice removal. They also create a workers' compensation risk from falling debris or shoulder injuries.
- Vehicles while in transit, parked waiting to load/unload on a shipper's property, or taking a mandatory rest brake may accumulate snow and ice with no opportunity for removal. In many cases shippers (including the Port of Baltimore) do not even allow a driver to exit his truck when he is picking up or dropping off a load.

Recognizing these challenges, the sponsor of the legislation is proposing amendments that would address some of the concerns that the trucking industry has raised. These amendments incorporate language from northeastern states that have passed similar legislation by ensuring drivers are not forced to take unsafe actions that may violate other workplace safety rules, and clarifying that no driver can be cited more than once in a 24 hour period for a violation so that he has time to clear his vehicle when he returns to a terminal or parks at a rest area since he cannot do so at roadside.

The passage of HB474 with the sponsor's amendments will make all drivers conscious of this safety issue, encouraging them to take steps to remove snow and ice. As such, MMTA respectfully asks the Committee to give this legislation a favorable report.

About Maryland Motor Truck Association: Maryland Motor Truck Association is a non-profit trade association that has represented the trucking industry since 1935. In service to its 900 members, MMTA is committed to support, advocate and educate for a safe, efficient and profitable trucking industry in Maryland.

For further information, contact: Louis Campion, (c) 443-623-5663

HB0474 Marty Lostrom MSBCA FWA

Uploaded by: Marty Lostrom

Position: FWA



February 27, 2026

The Honorable Marc Korman and Members
Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Informational Only – HB 474 - Vehicle Laws - Dangerous Accumulations of Snow and Ice - Removal From Exposed Vehicle Surfaces (Clear Before You Drive Act)

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland School Bus Contractors Association (MSBCA) has concerns regarding HB 474 - Vehicle Laws - Dangerous Accumulations of Snow and Ice - Removal from Exposed Vehicle Surfaces (Clear Before You Drive Act).

MSBCA serves as the voice of the private school bus companies that contract with local Maryland school systems in 20 of 24 jurisdictions. MSBCA members own and operate over 3,600, or 50% of the school buses transporting school children across the great State of Maryland. MSBCA contracted school buses routes travel over 58 million miles each year while remaining fully committed to the safety of the students we transport and considers it a privilege to do so.

MSBCA asks the sponsors and the committee to consider an amendment to this bill exempting school buses. Such exemption for school bus operations is particularly appropriate given the unique workforce demographics of this industry. State workforce data shows the average school bus driver is approximately 54 years old, with more than 70% of school bus drivers age 50 or older — significantly older than the general workforce. Maryland school transportation systems already face persistent driver shortages, and many districts rely heavily on retirees and second-career workers to meet transportation needs.

Requiring drivers or contractors to climb onto elevated bus sloped roofs in winter weather conditions presents disproportionate safety risks to this older workforce and could accelerate retirements, reduce available drivers, and ultimately disrupt student transportation statewide.

*Maryland School Bus Contractors Association
29 Frances Street, Annapolis, MD 21401
www.mdschoolbus.org*

Because school transportation is an essential public service — with a majority of Maryland students relying on buses to access education — unintended workforce impacts could directly affect school attendance, special education services, and family stability.

For these reasons, a narrowly tailored exemption for school buses would preserve student safety while avoiding unintended operational disruptions

Again, MSBCA looks forward to working with all our legislators to make Maryland the safest and most efficient state in the country for all our children.

Sincerely,

Steve Nelson

Steve Nelson
President

Marty Lostrom

Martha “Marty” Lostrom
Executive Director
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