

SenatorBailey_FAV_SB304.pdf

Uploaded by: Jack Bailey

Position: FAV

JACK BAILEY
Legislative District 29
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties

Budget & Taxation Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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February 4, 2026

Senate Bill 304 – Collisions With Wild Animals - Prohibited Actions by Insurer

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to introduce Senate Bill 304. This legislation would prohibit an insurer, with respect to private passenger motor vehicle insurance, from increasing a premium, adding a surcharge, or removing, altering, or refusing to consider a discount based on accidents or losses caused by a collision with a free-roaming wild animal and for which the insured was not at fault for the loss.

For the last two years, I have come before you with legislation based on my own personal experience with this issue. In September 2021, I was involved in a collision with a deer. My insurance company determined I was not at fault for this accident. However, this incident was later combined with a previous incident from 2020 and used as cause to increase my premium by 26%.

After the 2024 session, the Maryland Insurance Administration conducted a study to examine current insurer practices with regards to increasing premiums based on collisions with wild animals. This study found that no insurance companies in Maryland remove a discount specifically for collisions with wildlife. However, it did find that seven companies applied surcharges due to a claim for a collision with wildlife, and 15 companies consider the overall number or dollar amount of claims under comprehensive coverage, including collisions with wildlife, to determine qualification for a safe driver or loss free discount. Senate Bill 304 will prohibit these practices to ensure that consumers are protected from the risk of premium increases resulting from these deer strikes.

As we are all aware, deer collisions are far too common in Maryland. I don't believe that Marylanders should be required to pay more for their auto insurance because of an accident for which they were not at fault. This legislation is intended to ensure that Marylanders who find themselves in a similar situation in the future are protected from the premium increases that I experienced.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 304. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Bailey".

Senator Jack Bailey

SB 304_MAMIC_UNF.pdf

Uploaded by: Bryson Popham

Position: UNF



191 Main Street, Suite 310 – Annapolis MD 21401 – 410-268-6871

February 2, 2026

The Honorable Pam Beidle, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Senate Bill 304 - *Collisions With Wild Animals - Prohibited Actions by Insurer* - UNFAVORABLE

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Maryland Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (MAMIC), we respectfully oppose Senate Bill 304.

MAMIC is comprised of 12 mutual insurance companies that are headquartered in Maryland and neighboring states.

The Maryland Insurance Administration (MIA) has, among its primary duties, the obligation to review the rating practices of insurers to guarantee compliance with both State insurance statutes and other applicable laws. In automobile insurance, the collision of a vehicle with another object, whether that object is, for example, another vehicle, a fixed object such as a tree, or a wild animal such as a deer, may give rise to a permissible rating factor under conditions established by the MIA. The MIA is responsible for overseeing the use of all such rating factors by insurers. Traditionally, the General Assembly has consulted with the MIA on such matters and followed its advice.

On December 2, 2024, the MIA responded to the request of Chair Beidle with information regarding wild animal collisions and their effect on premium increases in private passenger automobile insurance. Some of the statistics gathered by the MIA are instructive. Of 73 insurers surveyed, the rating approaches for wild animal collisions differ. Such collisions may be counted toward a total number of incidents for a policyholder, a loss cost threshold toward a policyholder surcharge, or a specific surcharge related to a specific wild animal collision.

This variation illustrates the different ways that different insurers may treat wild animal collisions. The MIA study notes that “the majority of companies do not apply surcharges specifically for collisions with deer or other wildlife.” One lesson learned from these varying treatments by insurers is that consumers should shop for coverage among the approximately 150 licensed automobile insurers in the State, if they are concerned about the rating impact of a wild animal collision.

Another statistic worth noting in the MIA study is that there are over 30,000 claims each year for vehicle collisions with wildlife in the State. In 2023, for example, the average cost per claim exceeded \$6,000 and the total loss costs were nearly \$200 million. Because loss costs are an essential component of automobile insurance rating, applying these costs to persons who did not experience any wildlife collisions would simply increase rates for a majority of Maryland vehicle owners.

For these reasons, MAMIC respectfully requests an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 304.

Thank you for your consideration.

Melissa Shelley
President, MAMIC

cc: Bryson Popham

SB304_IAB_UNF.pdf

Uploaded by: Bryson Popham

Position: UNF



January 29, 2026

The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB 304 - Collisions with Wild Animals – Prohibited Actions by Insurer – UNFAVORABLE

Dear Senator Beidle and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Insurance Agents & Brokers of Maryland (IA&B), we respectfully urge an unfavorable vote on Senate Bill 304, which would prohibit insurers from using collisions with free-roaming wild animals as a rating factor in automobile insurance. IA&B is a professional trade association for independent insurance agents in Maryland, representing nearly 200 member agencies and their 1,800-plus employees.

Maryland law requires the Maryland Insurance Administration to ensure that any rating factor used by insurers is actuarially justified. In other words, rating factors must accurately reflect the level of risk being insured. Past vehicle collisions of any kind, including collisions with wild animals, are predictive of future claims.

When insurers are prohibited from considering certain indicators of risk, including a drivers' history of collisions with free-roaming wild animals, the costs associated with those accidents do not go away. Instead, the costs would be shifted across the broader pool of insured drivers, meaning low-risk drivers would be forced to effectively subsidize higher-risk individuals with prior collisions.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge an unfavorable vote on Senate Bill 304. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Johnathan Savant
Director, Government Affairs

SB 304 Collision with Animals Oppose .pdf

Uploaded by: Nancy Egan

Position: UNF

**Testimony of
American Property Casualty Insurance Association (APCIA)**

Senate Finance Committee

**Senate Bill 304 - Private Passenger Motor Vehicle Insurance -Collisions with Wild Animals-Prohibited
Actions by Insurers**

February 4, 2026

Unfavorable

The American Property Casualty Insurance Association (APCIA) is a national trade organization whose members write approximately 67.4% of the personal auto insurance market in Maryland. The bill prohibits an insurer, with respect to private passenger motor vehicle insurance, from increasing a premium, add a surcharge, or remove, alter or refuse to consider a discount based on accidents or losses based on the claims history of an insured where two or fewer of the claims within the immediately preceding 3-year period were for accidents or losses caused by a collision with a free- free-roaming wild animal and for which the insured was not at fault for the loss. APCIA opposes the legislation.

As the bill is currently drafted, it limits the ability of companies to underwrite the risk of an insured based on their claim history. Current law already provides a private passenger motor vehicle insurer may not cancel or refuse to renew coverage based on the claims history of an insured where two or fewer of the claims within the preceding three-year period were for accidents or losses where the insured was not at fault for the loss. This bill would in effect extend the existing limitation to any collision with an animal, which under common automobile policy language classifies as “other than collision” which is typically covered under comprehensive coverage.

As pointed out by the recent study by the Maryland Insurance Administration, [The Effects of Wild Animal Collisions on Premium Increase for Private Passenger Automobile Insurance Report](#), 90% of policyholders carry comprehensive coverage.¹ The study found that the vast majority (94.9% of the market by premium)of companies surveyed did not apply surcharges for comprehensive losses that as a result of collision with animals. Of the 73 companies surveyed, only 3 companies apply a surcharge for comprehensive losses with animals, however some companies include animal impact losses when calculating the loss cost threshold for a surcharge.²

Fifteen companies (11.86%) will consider claims under comprehensive coverage, including collisions with animals, to determine qualification for a safe driver or a loss free discount. These companies will consider the overall number or dollar amount of the claims to determine whether to remove the discount. Companies often consider comprehensive losses and not at fault accidents when initially underwriting a risk and this bill could impact those decisions as well.

Companies pass on the increased costs of these claims to their policyholders in two ways: by adjusting the base rate for all policyholders it can be raised; or individual policyholders can be charged more. This bill leaves only adjusting the base rate for all policyholders as the only option.

Finally, not all insurers will increase their premium for comprehensive losses, such as hitting an animal. But this bill could have the opposite effect. To avoid passing these costs on to all their customers, insurers could begin surcharging for a third collision with an animal. Or, because this only applies to wild animals, does that mean

¹ <https://insurance.maryland.gov/Consumer/Appeals%20and%20Grievances%20Reports/Effects-of-Wild-Animal-Collisions-on-Premium-Increases-for-Private-Passenger-Automobile-Insurance-%20Report.pdf> See page 5.

² Id.

insurers can surcharge for colliding with a domestic animal, like a dog, a cow, or a horse?

For these reasons, APCIA urges the Committee to provide an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 304.

Nancy J. Egan,

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