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March 4, 2026

The Honorable William C. Smith Jr.  
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee  
2 East Miller House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

***RE: Letter of Support with Amendments – Senate Bill 936 – Vehicle Laws - Bus Obstruction Monitoring Systems and Bus Stop Zones***

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully submits the following letter of support with amendments for Senate Bill 936. The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) and the Baltimore City Department of Transportation have partnered to plan, design, and install approximately 17 miles of DBLs throughout MTA’s Core Bus service area. These lanes minimize traffic delays for buses, thereby increasing transit speed and service reliability, reducing merging and yielding conflicts between buses and other vehicles, and establishing a path for emergency responders.

SB 936 expands the purview of bus facilities eligible for automated enforcement to include bus stop zones and makes relevant technical changes consistent with this addition. While we believe the bill sponsor's intent is to keep bus stops free of obstructions, this year’s version includes new exemption language not present in prior introductions. As written, the bill allows exemptions for stopping in a bus lane for any vehicle loading or unloading passengers, or for a vehicle that has activated its hazard lights. In practice, these exemptions make it legal for any driver to obstruct the bus lanes, regardless of reason, so long as they have their hazard lights on. MTA strongly requests that these exemptions be removed from the bill.

To further the goals of this bill and to ensure effective operation, MTA also recommends that the Committee add a definition of a “bus stop zone” to the Transportation Article. Establishing a spatial definition of “bus stop zone” would allow the enforcement authority established by this bill to become effective without the need for bus stop owners to install signage to establish the physical extents of each bus stop zone. MTA would be happy to work with the sponsor and the Committee to identify an appropriate definition.

While we appreciate the intent of SB 936 to keep bus stop zones free of obstructions, any exemptions must be carefully considered to avoid unintended consequences that invite vehicle-pedestrian conflicts. MTA has engaged with the bill sponsor on these concerns, and we look forward to working closely with them to ensure the safety and accessibility of bus stops.

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The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the Committee consider this information during its deliberation of Senate Bill 936 and ensure that a favorable report includes MDOT's suggested amendments.

Respectfully submitted,

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