



HB 0254
"State Highway Administration –
Pedestrian and Bicyclist Fatalities –
Infrastructure Review (Vision Zero
Implementation Act of 2022)"
SUPPORT

MARYLAND COALITION FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY

SUPPORTS HB 0254

February 1, 2022

TO:

Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
251 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

FROM:

John J. Seng, Director
Maryland Coalition For Highway Safety
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(202) 468-7682
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/marylandcoalitionhighwaysafety>

TO: Members of the of the Maryland House of Delegates Environment and Transportation Committee:

My name is John Seng, volunteer director and founder of the *Maryland Coalition For Highway Safety*.

Our 125-member organization supports HB 0254 "State Highway Administration – Pedestrian and Bicyclist Fatalities – Infrastructure Review (Vision Zero Implementation Act of 2022)."

Our founding organizations include the *American Automobile Association (AAA) Mid-Atlantic*, the *Greater Olney Civic Association*, *The Tantallon Citizens Association* in Prince George's County and a group of Maryland home owner associations.

The Problem

We are, quite frankly, fed up with excessive, dangerous speeding and other behaviors on Maryland roadways, and especially the risk to people walking or biking near or across our roads. We understand that all too often, poor and/or outdated roadway design leads directly to pedestrian and bicycle rider fatalities.

In its January 2022 Roadmap of State Highway Safety Laws just released, the national advocacy organization *Advocates for Highway & Auto Safety* warned:

- **Skyrocketing Fatalities, A Historic Increase -- The Carnage on Our Nation's Roads is Out of Control.**
- **Lawmakers Must Take the Wheel and Accelerate Policies to Drive Down the Physical, Emotional and Economic Cost of Crashes.**

<https://saferoads.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/FINAL-2022-Roadmap-of-State-Highway-Safety-Laws.pdf>

As the *Coalition* has shared with the ENT Committee previously:

- **“Maryland has averaged more than 500 traffic fatalities annually over the past five years, and despite reduced traffic volumes during the past six months due to the COVID-19 emergency, fatalities on our roadways have increased compared to 2019.”** (source: Chrissy Nizer, Administrator, MD MVA)
- **Maryland suffered 568 road deaths in 2020, compared to 535 in 2019, over fewer miles driven.** 2020 fatalities increased 6%, crashes increased 9% compared to 2019. (Maryland Highway Safety Office)

HB 0254 Takes a Major Step in the Right Direction

The *Coalition* has adopted a multi-faceted approach to propose methods to reduce roadway crashes and associated fatalities and injuries.

People shouldn't have to die in crosswalks or on their bicycles to inform and accelerate roadway safety for those who remain alive. But if we don't learn and improve design and practice in the wake of these tragedies, we're putting safety last, not first.

Adopting HB 0254 will be a major step in the right direction toward saving lives in Maryland by requiring the State Highway Administration to carefully study each pedestrian or bicyclist fatality that occurs on a State highway or at an intersection of a State highway and another highway or a municipal street; in timely fashion; and to communicate its findings to promote awareness and improvement in these problem areas as well as with future roadway design.

We thank you and the Committee for your review of our position, and urge you to submit a favorable recommendation and support for HB 0254.

Sincerely,

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

John J. Seng
Director

cc: *Coalition* membership