

February 3, 2022

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chairman, House Environment and Transportation Committee
251 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 254 – State Highway Administration – Pedestrian and Bicyclist Fatalities – Infrastructure Review (Vision Zero Implementation Act of 2022)

Dear Chairman Barve and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 254 but offers the following information for the Committee’s consideration.

House Bill 254 would require the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) to perform an infrastructure review of each pedestrian or bicyclist fatality on a State highway or at an intersection where a State highway meets another highway or a municipal street; the MDOT SHA would also be required to complete the infrastructure review within six months after the fatality and publish the review on the MDOT SHA website.

Maryland’s Vision Zero Program was established by the Maryland General Assembly in 2019, with the goal of reaching zero vehicle-related deaths or serious injuries by 2030. In collaboration with a vast network of partners, the MDOT has since launched a variety of strategies to decrease serious injuries and fatalities on Maryland roadways:

- Developed Maryland’s Strategic Highway Safety Plan for 2021-2025.
- Uses a data driven approach to locate and address needed infrastructure improvements at certain locations.
- Partnered with law enforcement to administer initiatives related to the existing pedestrian and bicyclist laws.
- Implemented system-wide infrastructure treatments, land-use planning, and countermeasures to address pedestrian and bicyclist safety on Maryland roadways.
- Supported legislative and policy efforts that advance pedestrian and bicyclist safety.
- Encouraged public awareness and education of pedestrian and bicyclist safety through training and media outreach.
- Identified, promoted, and implemented engineering and technological approaches that support the safety of pedestrian and bicyclist.
- Developed the “Context Driven – Access and Mobility for All Users” guide that focuses on creating a safe, accessible, and balanced multimodal transportation system.

Vision Zero is a statewide initiative that includes transportation departments at the county and municipal level. Approximately one-third of both pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities occur on roads not owned or maintained by the MDOT SHA. It is critical that, for the success of the Vision Zero Program, all State, county, and municipal roads be considered when a fatality occurs, to remain consistent with the Statewide Vision Zero goal.

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House Bill 254 requires an infrastructure review within six months after the fatality, as well as for MDOT SHA to publish that review on our website. The Department's awareness of fatalities on the State's roadways is contingent upon the responding law enforcement agencies notification to MDOT SHA. The timing of notification varies and is dependent on the law enforcement agency responding to the incident. Once MDOT SHA is made aware of a fatality on a State road, our current practices include an infrastructure review at the location where the fatality occurred. Upon receiving the notification of a fatality, the MDOT SHA will do a review of the crash site, where infrastructure improvements are assessed and a full review of the crash report is conducted. Should an improvement be identified, it is included in the project development process. It is important to note that Vision Zero is comprised of six different elements, one of them being infrastructure. When addressing pedestrian and bicycle safety through the lens of Vision Zero, it is necessary to consider the other five elements: Distracted Driving, Impaired Driving, Occupant Protection, Pedestrians, and Aggressive Driving.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information and the offered amendments when deliberating House Bill 254.

Sincerely,

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