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February 22, 2024

Delegate Marc Korman, Chair
House Environment and Transportation Committee
251 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB 135 – UNFAVORABLE – Transportation – Maryland Transportation Authority – Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Accessibility

Dear Chair Korman and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Asphalt Association (MAA) is comprised of 19 producer members representing more than 48 production facilities, 25 contractor members, 25 consulting engineer firms and 41 other associate members. MAA works proactively with regulatory agencies to represent the interests of the asphalt industry both in the writing and interpretation of state and federal regulations that may affect our members. We also advocate for adequate state and federal funding for Maryland's multimodal transportation system.

House Bill 135 sets up various procedures for the Maryland Transportation Authority to allow pedestrians and bicyclists on highways, including the construction of bicycle ways and pedestrian walkways on highways overseen by the Maryland Transportation Authority.

While MAA appreciates the need for safe pedestrian and bicycle crossings in Maryland, HB 135 seems to have missed the mark. Allowing pedestrians and bicyclists on highways managed by the Maryland Transportation Authority seems highly dangerous. Highways are designed for high-speed traffic, and introducing pedestrians and cyclists would lead to higher rates of crashes and fatalities. At a time when the State is really pushing to create safer roads, this bill seems unwise. Additionally, the presence of pedestrians and cyclists on highways might disrupt ongoing construction projects. Construction zones typically have specific safety protocols, and introducing non-motorized traffic could complicate these protocols, potentially delaying projects and increasing costs.

We appreciate you taking the time to consider our request for an **UNFAVORABLE** report on House Bill 135.

Sincerely,

Tim E. Smith, P.E.
President
Maryland Asphalt Association