



HB 135: Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety and Accessibility
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Terps For Bike Lanes – FAVORABLE

February 1, 2024

Chair Korman and Committee Members,

I am writing this testimony on behalf of Terps For Bike Lanes in support of House Bill 135, which seeks to repeal the prohibition on pedestrians and bicycles using Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) highways. As an organization dedicated to enhancing bicycle infrastructure in and around our campus, we believe that this legislation aligns with our mission to create a safe and inclusive environment for cyclists and pedestrians. Our advocacy efforts are rooted in the values of sustainability, accessibility, and equity. Bike lanes, in particular, play a crucial role in promoting environmental sustainability by offering an eco-friendly transportation option. Furthermore, the expansion of bike infrastructure contributes to increased accessibility, making our campus more cyclist and pedestrian-friendly. Importantly, this infrastructure can address economic disparities in marginalized communities, providing affordable transportation options for students and addressing environmental and transportation inequalities in affected areas.

Research findings support the safety, economic, and equity benefits of allowing bicycles and pedestrians on controlled-access highways. Studies such as "Safety and Convenience: Examining the Impacts of Allowing Bicycle Use on Controlled-Access Highways" (Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice, 2017) by Carolyn Schweiger and Eric Dumbaugh demonstrate that with proper planning and infrastructure, allowing bicycles on some controlled-access highways can be safe. Additionally, "The 2023 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Bicycle Safety Report" provides data on bicycle crashes and fatalities, underscoring the need for safer infrastructure. Economic benefits are highlighted in "The Economic Benefits of Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure" (Journal of Transport Economics and Policy, 2015) by John Pucher and Rachel Buehler, emphasizing increased tourism, property values, and job creation. Another study, "A Study of the Economic Impact of the East Coast Greenway on Maryland" (2023) by the East

Coast Greenway Alliance, showcases the economic benefits of greenways in Maryland, transferable to MDTA projects. Equity and accessibility are addressed in "Equity and Accessibility in Transportation Planning: A Case Study of Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure" (Urban Geography, 2018) by David Brown and Amanda Damm, emphasizing the importance of considering equity and accessibility when planning transportation infrastructure. Furthermore, the "Maryland Department of Transportation Equity Analysis Plan" (2022) provides a framework for analyzing the equity impacts of transportation projects in Maryland.

In conclusion, Terps for Bike Lanes believes that House Bill 135 is a step in the right direction towards creating a safer, more sustainable, and equitable transportation system in Maryland. We kindly request your support for this important legislation, as it aligns with our shared goals of promoting cycling and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to witnessing positive changes in Maryland's transportation landscape. We urge a Favorable committee report on this legislation and encourage the House to pass it on the floor. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

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