
March 27, 2025

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

RE: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 345 – Transportation - Vision Zero Advisory Commission - Establishment

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) offers the following information on Senate Bill 345 for the Committee's consideration.

Senate Bill 345 seeks to establish a Vision Zero Advisory Commission to provide feedback to MDOT on its vision zero goal. It further requires an annual report to the General Assembly on the status of Vision Zero along with the recommendations from the Commission.

The MDOT supports the Vision Zero strategy through the Strategic Highway Safety Plan, a statewide, coordinated, comprehensive plan to reduce highway fatalities and serious injuries on all public streets and highways. It establishes overall goals and objectives, as well as strategies within each of six emphasis areas (EAs), including speeding and aggressive driving, distracted driving, impaired driving, occupant protection, pedestrian and bicyclist safety, and highway infrastructure.

The Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) is required as a component of Congress' Transportation funding bill (currently the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act - IIJA). The fatality and serious injury goals and their interim targets are aligned with those reported to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) through the Highway Safety Plan, and to the Federal Highway Administration through the Highway Safety Improvement Plan. These plans outline the projects and programs Maryland will utilize to improve highway safety. The Federal Highway Administration requires the reporting of the number of fatalities, the fatality rate, the number of serious injuries, the serious injury rate, and the total number of non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries. These metrics serve as the performance measures used to track the State's progress. The current implementation of the SHSP began January 1, 2021, and continues through December 31, 2025.

Led by an Executive Council consisting of leadership from multiple state agencies, the SHSP focuses on strategies and actions to help Maryland reach zero fatalities by 2030. State agencies that make up the Executive Committee include: the Maryland Department of Transportation, the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA), Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA), and State Highway Administration (SHA), the Maryland State Police (MSP), the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS), the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), and the Maryland Department of Information Technology (DoIT).

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The Executive Council is tasked with the development and implementation of the SHSP and is responsible for day-to-day SHSP leadership, administration, and coordination. The Executive Council considers a variety of key factors to determine the emphasis areas and strategies that will prevent casualties on our roadways. In cooperation with a steering committee, EA team leaders and their members, the Executive Council shares the responsibility of meeting and exceeding prescribed performance targets.

The SHSP Executive Council and Maryland Highway Safety Office (MHSO) management monitor output measures (the extent to which SHSP strategies and actions are implemented) and outcome measures (the degree to which SHSP strategies and activities contribute to reducing fatalities and serious injuries, improve road user safety attitudes and behaviors). Together they track these measures and report results to agency leaders, safety stakeholders, and policy makers. If the EAs do not make progress or meet goals, the Executive Council will examine the process and reconsider the EA action plan. Equipped with these measures, Maryland can direct resources and efforts to the most critical issues and strengthen the most effective prevention strategies.

Maryland's SHSP Executive Council conducts an annual review of the SHSP to monitor implementation, prioritize or re-prioritize strategies and action steps, and ensure the timeliness, accuracy, completeness, uniformity, integration, and accessibility of traffic data. The annual review monitors progress toward FHWA's Safety Performance Measures (number of fatalities, fatality rates, serious injury counts, serious injury rates, and non-motorized fatalities and serious injury counts in Maryland). The SHSP Executive Council will solicit support to produce the next iteration of the SHSP (2026-2030) in late 2024.

MDOT would like to highlight one issue with the bill as drafted as the Committee considers this legislation. Subsection (k), paragraph (3) of the bill requires the Commission to review safety deficiencies at crash sites where there have been three or more fatalities within 12 months, including deficiencies identified by infrastructure reviews conducted by SHA following bicyclist and pedestrian fatalities on State highways or at the intersection of a State highway and another highway or a municipal street. The current language in the bill is unclear as to the specific triggers that would require review by the Commission. For example, a standard based on fatalities could be triggered by a single crash, which does not suggest that a site is any more or less unsafe than any other location along a highway. Further, the area under review is not defined, meaning that any three fatal crashes along a single roadway could trigger a review of the entire roadway, leading to significant review costs for SHA – the party most likely to be tasked with the reviews on behalf of the Commission – without additional funds identified to offset these costs. By focusing this requirement on the infrastructure reviews required by § 8-204.2 of the Transportation Article, the Commission will be able to highlight impacts to vulnerable road users on State highways.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating Senate Bill 345.

Respectfully submitted,

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