



Environment and Transportation Committee
Kumar Barve, Chair
Dana Stein, Vice-Chair

Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB 70 - Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023

January 31, 2023

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Peter Gray and I represent the Washington Area Bicyclist Association. I am speaking on behalf of the 1500 plus WABA members and several thousands of other supporters who live in Maryland.

In 2019, the General Assembly unanimously voted to commit Maryland to achieve Vision Zero – that’s zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries – by 2030. Yet, four years later, it is not clear that MDOT has made any significant changes in funding, focus or policy to actually achieve it. HB 70 is a critical, concrete step towards achieving Vision Zero.

WABA supports the passage of HB 70 and its mandate that MDOT apply context-driven design elements for pedestrian and bicycle safety on the development of all construction, post construction, improvement, preservation and maintenance plans. WABA applauds the bill provision that requires MDOT SHA to issue this year reports that will provide the public with useful information about MDOT SHA staffing issues relating to implementation of bicycle/pedestrian projects. Most importantly, this bill mandates that MDOT SHA issue a report with a full analysis of all state highways in suburban activity centers and traditional town centers including an installation plan and timeline to establish safe crossings of all of those state highways!

In my role as co-chair of the Montgomery County Families for Safe Streets, I have helped organize and attend numerous memorials for people killed while walking or biking on State Highways. From those tragic memorials it is clear to me that the conditions of most State Highways are not safe for people walking and biking.

In addition, the most recent traffic fatalities on State Highways in my County have occurred at locations where other vulnerable road users have died in the past few years. In one case, two members of the same family were killed while crossing the same street, mere blocks from one another. It is clear that MDOT SHA has not comprehensively examined the sites where crash fatalities are happening. Nor has the State agency charged with maintaining a safe environment for all road users done enough to make those roads safer, even when multiple pedestrians and bicyclists have died in the exact same spots.

Therefore it is imperative that the Committee issue a favorable report on HB 70. We desperately need development of recommendations of changes to our roads which will eliminate future fatalities and serious injuries be put into law. We need the passage of HB 70 to mandate MDOT SHA make the changes necessary to avoid future pedestrian and bicyclist deaths on our State Highways.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on HB 70.