



House Bill 628

Highways - Sidewalks and Bicycle Pathways - Construction and Reconstruction

MACo Position:

To: Environment and Transportation Committee

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Date: February 13, 2025

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) submits this **LETTER OF INFORMATION** on HB 628. The bill would give counties that have vision zero programs priority in receiving state funds or program support for sidewalks and bicycle pathways.

The State Highway Administration is a major actor with the construction and maintenance of major state arteries. However, in many cases, the State fails to follow through and maintain the auxiliary components of sensible roadway planning, including bicycle lanes and sidewalks. HB 628 is designed to further encourage the State to fulfill its reasonable responsibility – especially since local governments have been denied fair transportation funding for over 15 years.

Local governments in Maryland own and maintain roughly 5 of every 6 road miles across the state. Counties maintain the bulk of this infrastructure, whether it be in urban areas found within the greater Baltimore-Washington region, or in the rural sections of Western Maryland and the Eastern Shore. “Great Recession” era cuts to highway user revenues (the share of state transportation revenues sent for local roadway maintenance) have left local transportation infrastructure far underfunded for the last 15 years. As this committee debates the prioritization of sidewalk and bicycle pathway funding, counties urge that properly aligning the burdens of repair and maintenance of sidewalks and bicycle pathways along state highways is also reconsidered.

Proper care of the roadway should include its full scope, from the surface itself, to underground conduits, to amenities like bicycle lanes and sidewalks. MACo thanks the committee for the opportunity to submit this letter of information on HB 628, and stands ready to provide more information, if needed.