



Environmental Matters Committee
House Office Building, Room 250
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

February 4, 2014

SUPPORT HB 241

Dear Chairperson McIntosh, Vice Chair Malone and Members of Environmental Matters Committee,

Bike Maryland represents the hundreds of thousands of bicyclists in Maryland and we support HB 241 that will improve safety for motorists and bicyclists.

Bike Maryland requests a favorable report on House Bill 241, the Bicycle Passing Bill, sponsored by Delegate Lafferty. This bill clarifies the existing 3 feet to pass law by requiring drivers to allow 3' to pass a bicyclist on every road. It authorizes a driver of a vehicle to drive across the left-side of a roadway in a no-passing zone, if it is safe to do so, to give a bicyclist a minimum of 3 feet of passing distance. It eliminates the narrow lane exception to the existing 3' to pass bill. Similar laws have already been passed in 32 states.

HB 241 will clarify the current law which is currently confusing and contradictory as the prohibition in the law for drivers to cross a solid lane marker / double yellow line causes drivers to drive too close to cyclists and therefore puts cyclists' lives at risk and makes it difficult to educate or enforce the 3' to pass requirement. Furthermore, the exception to the 3' to pass for narrow lanes puts cyclists lives at risk because it removes the requirements for trucks to allow 3' of clearance when passing cyclists (this is exactly the testimony of the trucking lobbyist last year against a similar bill: eliminating the exception would mean that trucks would have to allow 3' of clearance when passing a cyclist, which they are not required to do under the current statute).

Already, section 21-305 of the Maryland Code authorizes drivers to drive on the left side of an unmarked road when there is no oncoming traffic and a clear line of sight, except in specific situations: on a curve, approaching an intersection, approaching the top of a hill.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide our view on this legislation.

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