

Supportive Organizations:

Annapolis Bicycling Club
Baltimore Bicycle Club
The Baltimore College-town Network
Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis & Anne Arundel County
Bike Maryland
Bike SBY
Coalition for Smarter Growth
Cumberland Valley Cycling Club
Eastern Shore International Mountain Biking Association

Howard County Bicycle Advocates
Hub City Cycles
MD Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Com.
Mid MD Triathlon Club
Montgomery County Civic Federation
Oxen Hill Bicycle and Trail Club
Rockville Bicycle Advisory Committee
Washington Area Bicycle Association
1000 Friends of Maryland

February 4, 2014

Re: House Bill 241

Position: Favorable

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

The groups listed above representing the hundreds of thousands of bicyclists in Maryland, request 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 34 states.

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.

Passage of HB 241 will clarify the existing 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).

Thank you for your support of this important legislation that will improve safety for bicyclists and motorists. We ask that you please support HB241.

Thank you,
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