

**Supported by:**

Baltimore Bicycle Club  
Bicycling Advocates of Howard County  
College Park Area Bicycle Coalition  
Environment Maryland  
Maryland League of Conservation Voters  
One Less Car  
Sierra Club Maryland Chapter  
Washington Area Bicycle Association

**Testimony on House Bill 461 - Bicycle Safety Bill**

February 15, 2010

**Position: Favorable**

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

The groups listed above request a favorable report on HB461, a measure that furthers this administrations recognized goal of creating a more bicycle-friendly Maryland.

HB461 creates a reasonable “safety bubble” for bicyclists sharing a travel lane with automobiles by requiring a motorist passing a bicyclist to do so at a safe distance of three feet. Additionally, this bill requires a driver of a motor vehicle to yield to the right of way of the bicyclist. This is a crucial factor in bicycle safety. Not yielding the right-of-way or unsafely overtaking a bicycle is reckless and potentially lethal.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration more than 51,000 cyclists have died in traffic crashes on our nation’s roads since 1932. If enacted, HB461 will contribute greatly to the overall safety of tens of thousands of current bicyclists and encourage future bicyclist to take to our roads with confidence.

This three-foot requirement is modeled after similar safety legislation that has been implemented in over twenty states. Numerous local and national safety and advocacy groups, environmental and conservation groups, transportation related organizations, the American Automobile Association and the Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, have endorsed this bill.

Furthermore, the increased use of bicycles for transportation can have important environmental, public and individual health and economic benefits. This bill will contribute to the quality of life of many Marylanders. Bicycles are a practical alternative to automobiles for short trips and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Maryland can be an example of the economic and social good that comes from a society where everyone – regardless of age, physical condition or economic background - has the opportunity to safely bike or walk to get where they need to go.

The groups listed above thank the committee for its consideration of this important matter and respectfully request a favorable report.