



Washington Area Bicyclist Association

GETTING THERE BY BIKE

Comments of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association on Senate Bill 551-Vehicle Laws-Bicycles and Motor Scooters- Exceptions to Requirement to Stay Right

I am writing today on behalf of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) to encourage you to support without amendment Senate Bill 551-Vehicle Laws-Bicycles and Motor Scooters-Exceptions to Requirement to Stay Right. WABA is a non-profit safety and educational organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of the Washington region through the promotion of bicycling for transportation and recreation. WABA currently represents over 7000 cyclists in the region, over 2500 of which live and ride in Maryland.

As currently written, the “ride to the right” requirement in Maryland State Code forces cyclists to adopt dangerous behavior in order to stay in obedience to the law. The current law is very restrictive in that it does not allow for a cyclist to move away from the curb to avoid obstacles or debris, or to continue on a straight path through an intersection with a right turn only lane. SB 551 would allow for cyclists to move away from the curb if traveling at the same speed of traffic, when the travel lane is not wide enough to be shared with another vehicle, or to avoid obstacles and debris.

By adopting SB 551 without amendments, the state code would be encouraging proper cycling behavior as outlined in the state Department of Transportation’s “Safe Bicycling in Maryland” guide, as well as recommendations from the League of American Bicyclists, the nation’s authority of effective behavior and will go a long way toward bringing Maryland State Vehicle Code more in line with the Uniform Vehicle Code.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Eric Gilliland
Executive Director