

Timestamp	First name	Last name	City	State	Zip Code	Are you representing yourself?	If no, what organization or whom do you represent?	Legislation	Position	Remarks	Attachments
Bill No. 76-25											
2025-10-31 19:13:26	Martin	McCue	Arnold	MD	21012	Yes		Bill No. 76-25: (As Amended) AN ORDINANCE	Support	When I first saw that there was going to be a snow clearing ordinance amendment, I assumed it was inevitably going to burden property owners more than the current one. But a piece in the Severna Park Voice by Council Member Amanda Fiedler made me realize that perhaps this amendment will have the opposite effect. There is a sense of "light touch" enforcement here in the new amendment that makes a lot of sense. Since the amendment establishes a process of more gradual pressure rather than heavy-handed enforcement, and caps the fines, I believe it will be an improvement on the current ordinance. [I don't have a sidewalk of my own to clear, so I will not be directly affected by this amendment. Instead, during the few snowfalls we have, I clear snow on driveways for a few elderly neighbors (or at least people who are a little more elderly and immobile than I am). But I lived in Rochester, NY, for 25 years before coming back here to Maryland, so I know snow. Your snow issues are comparatively small, yet to me, it is government that seems less capable in dealing with snow here than the average homeowner.] A snow clearing ordinance makes little sense unless the sidewalks are in locations with substantial pedestrian traffic or the sidewalks are necessary to protect pedestrians who otherwise would have to walk in the street. That suggests the ordinance is only needed in places like Annapolis and perhaps downtown Glen Burnie, and only a handful of other places. After all, the sidewalks are almost never built by the homeowner on whom the clearance burden will rest, but by the city or county, or by a developer implementing mandatory government regulations. You are the true cost causer here, so good economics suggests it should be the county that bears the burden of clearance, not the homeowner. But I realize that is less likely to be successful in this world, or cost effective. Nevertheless, it counsels toward tolerance as much as practicable. A few other comments. I understand that staff didn't want to consider expanding the number of exemptions because it was hard to do. I find that was unconvincing, or worse. But a comparable result might be obtained if there is "legislative history" that guides enforcement toward a policy of forgiveness whenever practicable. The softening of the ordinance should continue in your upcoming meeting. One last thought. Sometimes, public rules can lead to private lawsuits. There may be an army of personal injury lawyers waiting to somehow cash in on new kinds of "slip and fall" lawsuits here against people who don't clear their sidewalks. That should be squashed right at the outset. You should make it clear that a failure to clear does not establish a basis for lawsuits and only triggers a series of progressive steps designed to encourage clearing on a cooperative basis.	