

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2007 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 935

(Senator Robey, *et al.*)

Judicial Proceedings

Environmental Matters

Vehicle Laws - Traffic Control Signals - Exit Ramps

This bill establishes a new violation of the Motor Vehicle Law for the failure to stop at a nonfunctioning traffic control signal when approaching a highway from an expressway exit ramp. The bill specifies what constitutes a “stop.” The Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) has to assess two points against an individual’s driving record for a violation after conviction. A person convicted of this misdemeanor is subject to a fine of up to \$500.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Minimal general fund revenue increase from the penalty provision applicable to this proposed offense under the Maryland Vehicle Law (maximum \$500 fine). Enforcement could be provided with existing resources.

Local Effect: Enforcement could be provided with existing resources.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: A “highway” is the entire width between the boundary lines of any way or thoroughfare, which may be used by the public for vehicular travel, whether or not the way or thoroughfare has been dedicated to the public and accepted by a proper authority. An “expressway” is a highway of two or more traffic lanes in each direction that is designed to eliminate principal traffic hazards. An expressway is characterized by a median divider that separates opposing traffic, grade separation structures, predetermined

points of entrance and exit, vertical curves that provide long sight distances, and wide shoulders that enable parking away from traffic lanes.

Vehicular traffic facing a steady red circular signal must stop at the near side of an intersection at a clearly marked stop line or before entering any crosswalk, if there is no stop line. If there is no crosswalk, the traffic must stop before entering any intersection. The traffic must remain stopped until a signal to proceed is shown. A person who violates this provision is guilty of a misdemeanor and is subject to a maximum fine of \$500. The prepayment penalty assessed by the District Court is \$140. Upon conviction, the MVA is required to assess two points against the driving record of the violator. Points assessed are retained for two years on the driving record.

Unless otherwise specified, any person convicted of a misdemeanor for a violation of the Maryland Vehicle Law is subject to a maximum fine of \$500.

State Fiscal Effect: The MVA advises that imposing two points on the records of drivers who commit this proposed offense would not cause it to take additional actions besides the point assessment. Over the long term, however, adding two points could increase the number of conferences, suspensions, and revocations as drivers become subject to these penalties sooner than they might otherwise. However, this impact should be absorbable within the existing resources of the MVA.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

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ncs/ljm

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