

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2013 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 223 (Delegate Parrott, *et al.*)
 Environmental Matters

Vehicle Laws - Maximum Speed Limits on Highways

This bill increases the maximum speed limit on State highways from 65 to 70 miles per hour and establishes a maximum speed limit on the Intercounty Connector (ICC) highway of 70 miles per hour.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) expenditures increase, potentially significantly, in FY 2014 for highway speed engineering studies. Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) nonbudgeted expenditures increase by \$350,000 in FY 2014 for highway speed engineering studies. TTF and nonbudgeted expenditures increase in FY 2015 and future years to the extent speed limits are changed and road engineering modifications are required. Revenues are not likely affected; however, to the extent speed limits are increased, general fund revenues may decrease minimally due to fewer citations being issued for exceeding the speed limit.

(in dollars)	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SF Expenditure	-	-	-	-	-
NonBud Exp.	350,000	-	-	-	-
Net Effect	(\$350,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate effect

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: Generally, a maximum speed limit of more than 55 miles per hour may not be established or continued on any highway in the State that (1) is not an interstate highway or an expressway or (2) would subject the State to federal funding sanctions under 23 USC 154. A maximum speed limit of more than 65 miles per hour may not be established on any highway in the State.

Background:

Highway Speed Limits

According to the Federal Highway Administration, the management of speed through appropriate speed limits is an essential element of highway safety. In terms of traffic law, speed limits should reflect the maximum reasonable and safe speed for normal conditions. If lower speed limits are desired, engineering modifications and other measures should be implemented that reduce speeds to a level that would support a lower limit.

The Institute of Transportation Engineers advises that the most widely accepted method for establishing speed limits is to set the limit at or below the speed at which 85% of the traffic is moving. Research indicates that crash rates are lowest at that speed.

Intercounty Connector

The ICC is a planned 18.8-mile tolled highway extending from the I-270/I-370 corridor in Montgomery County to the I-95/US 1 corridor in Prince George's County. The first 5.65-mile tolled segment of the ICC, from I-370 at Shady Grove to MD 97/Georgia Avenue in Rockville/Olney, opened in February 2011. A second segment of the ICC, from Georgia Avenue to I-95 (Exit 31) at Laurel, opened in November 2011. The final segment of the ICC, from I-95 eastbound to US 1, is tentatively scheduled to open in spring 2014. MDTA will own, operate, and maintain the roadway once construction is complete. ICC construction is managed by the State Highway Administration and has been underway since 2007.

The ICC was designed for a maximum speed of 60 miles per hour due to safety and environmental concerns. An engineering study of the ICC recently concluded that it would be safe to increase the highway's speed limit from 55 to 60 miles per hour if supported by an analysis of crash data that is anticipated in early February. After reviewing accident data, MDTA may decide to increase the ICC's speed limit. It is estimated that raising the speed limit to 60 miles per hour would reduce 90 seconds from the 18.8-mile drive.

To date, there have been no fatal crashes and 20 single-vehicle accidents on the ICC.

Speeding is one of the most prevalent factors contributing to traffic crashes. According to national data from the U.S. Department of Transportation, in 2010, speeding was a contributing factor in 32% of all fatal crashes and 10,395 lives were lost in speeding-related crashes.

State Expenditures: TTF expenditures increase potentially significantly in fiscal 2014 to conduct highway speed engineering studies for highways throughout the State. MDTA nonbudgeted expenditures increase by \$350,000 in fiscal 2014 to conduct engineering studies of the John F. Kennedy Memorial Highway and Baltimore Harbor Tunnel. Because the ICC was designed for a maximum speed of 60 miles per hour, this estimate assumes the speed limit is not changed. In fiscal 2015 and future years, TTF and nonbudgeted expenditures increase to the extent highway speeds are adjusted and road engineering adjustments are required.

When highway speed limits are increased, installation of new signs and possibly guardrails is required for safety reasons. The fabrication and installation of ground mounted signs costs approximately \$300 to \$500 per sign and installation of guardrails and other roadside treatments averages \$25,000 per location.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Montgomery County, Maryland Department of Transportation, Maryland Transportation Authority, Institute of Transportation Engineers, U.S. Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 1, 2013
mlm/ljm

Analysis by: Amanda Mock

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510