

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 780 (Delegate Wells, *et al.*)
Environment and Transportation

Baltimore City - Speed Limits - Establishment

This bill authorizes Baltimore City to establish the maximum speed limit on a highway under its jurisdiction without performing an engineering and traffic investigation.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill does not directly affect State finances or operations.

Local Effect: Baltimore City expenditures decrease minimally if fewer engineering and traffic investigations are conducted. As Baltimore City did not respond to a request for information for this fiscal and policy note, it is unclear to what extent the city would use the authorization. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Unless there is a special danger that requires a lower speed, the maximum lawful speeds on a State highway are (1) 15 miles per hour in alleys in Baltimore County; (2) 30 miles per hour on all highways in a business district and on undivided highways in a residential district; (3) 35 miles per hour on divided highways in a residential district; (4) 50 miles per hour on undivided highways in other locations; and (6) 55 miles per hour on divided highways in other locations. A maximum speed limit of more than 70 miles per hour may not be established on any highway in the State.

If, on the basis of an engineering and traffic investigation, a local authority determines that a maximum speed is greater or less than is reasonable or safe under existing conditions on

any part of a highway in its jurisdiction, the local authority may establish a reasonable and safe maximum speed limit for that part of the highway, which may:

- decrease the limit at an intersection;
- increase the limit in an urban district to not more than 50 miles per hour;
- decrease the speed limit in an urban district; or
- decrease the limit outside an urban district to not less than 25 miles per hour.

An engineering and traffic investigation is not required to conform a speed limit in effect on December 31, 1974, to one of the specified speed limits established by statute.

In school zones as designated and posted by the local authorities of any county, the county (or any municipality within the county) may decrease the maximum speed limit to 15 miles per hour during school hours, if the county (or municipality) pays the cost of placing and maintaining the signage.

Altered speed limits are effective when posted on appropriate signs giving notice of the limit. Any alteration by a local authority (except in Baltimore City) of a maximum speed limit on a part (or extension) of a State highway is not effective until approved by the State Highway Administration.

A local authority may establish a reasonable and safe maximum speed limit for an alley if it determines that the maximum speed limit under State law is greater than is reasonable or safe. However, the local authority must post a speed limit on appropriate signs giving notice of the speed limit.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

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mm/ljm

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