

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 203

(Montgomery County Delegation)

Environment and Transportation

Judicial Proceedings

Montgomery County - Maximum Speed Limits Outside Urban Districts
MC 24-19

This bill decreases the lowest maximum speed limit that Montgomery County may establish for a highway outside an urban district from 25 to 20 miles per hour. Pursuant to current law, the county must determine (through an engineering and traffic investigation) 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.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Potential minimal increase in general fund revenues due to more citations for speeding, assuming Montgomery County uses the authorization granted by the bill to decrease speed limits in designated areas. The District Court can handle any additional caseload with existing resources; likewise, any enforcement of lower speed limits can be handled with existing resources.

Local Effect: Local government finances are not materially affected, unless Montgomery County undertakes an engineering and traffic investigation to determine whether to further decrease the speed limit outside an urban district. Enforcement of lower speed limits can be handled with existing resources, assuming Montgomery County decreases speed limits as a result of the bill.

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.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 332 of 2017, an identical bill as amended, passed the House and received a hearing in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, but no further action was taken.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Montgomery County; Department of State Police; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 13, 2019
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