

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

Senate Bill 804

(Senators Lee and Smith)

Judicial Proceedings

Rules and Executive Nominations

Vehicle Laws – Reckless Driving Contributing to an Accident – Required Court Appearance

This bill specifies that a person charged with a reckless driving offense that contributes to an accident must appear in court and may not prepay the fine.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not anticipated to materially affect State revenues, and enforcement can be handled with existing resources, as discussed below.

Local Effect: Enforcement can be handled with existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: A person is guilty of reckless driving if a motor vehicle is driven in wanton or willful disregard for the safety of persons or property or in a manner that indicates a wanton or willful disregard for the safety of persons or property. A violation is a misdemeanor, subject to a maximum fine of \$1,000. The Motor Vehicle Administration is also required to assess six points against the driver's license upon conviction for this offense. The prepayment penalty established by the District Court for this offense is \$510.

Background: The District Court reports that, in fiscal 2018, there were 13,477 citations issued for reckless driving, of which 327 were prepaid, 5,478 went to trial, and 7,672 remain open.

State Fiscal Effect: Any impact on fine revenues cannot be reliably estimated at this time, as the number of convictions for reckless driving offenses that contribute to accidents and the actual fines that the court may impose are unknown. Nevertheless, given the relatively small proportion of fines that are typically prepaid for this offense, the bill is not anticipated to materially affect State revenues. The District Court can handle any additional must-appear offenses generated by the bill with existing resources.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 112 (Delegate Lafferty) - Environment and Transportation.

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

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