

Department of Legislative Services  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2021 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
 First Reader

Senate Bill 297 (Senator Benson)  
 Judicial Proceedings

Vehicle Laws - Speed Restrictions - Expressways and Interstate Highways

This bill requires that all expressways and interstate highways that connect with I-495 in Maryland have the same maximum speed limit as I-495 at the point of connection for at least five miles from the point of entrance to or exit from I-495. The State Highway Administration (SHA) must post notice of the maximum speed limit on an expressway at least every five miles.

Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** Transportation Trust Fund expenditures increase by approximately \$158,000 in FY 2022 only to add and modify signage in the affected locations. General fund revenues increase, likely minimally, as the bill’s requirement results in a lower speed limit on some roadways, which may result in more citations for speeding.

(in dollars)	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026
GF Revenue	-	-	-	-	-
SF Expenditure	\$158,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Effect	(\$158,000)	-	-	-	-

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

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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. A maximum speed limit of more than 70 miles per hour may not be established on any highway in the State.

An “expressway” is a major highway of two or more traffic lanes in each direction that is designed to eliminate principal traffic hazards and has the following characteristics:

- a median divider separating opposing traffic lanes to eliminate head-on collisions and sideswiping;
- grade separation structures to eliminate the conflict of cross streams of traffic at each intersection;
- points of entrance and exit limited to predetermined locations;
- vertical curves long enough to provide long sight distances; and
- shoulders wide enough to permit vehicles to stop or park out of traffic lanes.

**State Fiscal Effect:** SHA advises that the bill affects a limited number of roadways that connect with I-495, including:

- I-270;
- I-95;
- I-295; and
- U.S. Route 50.

The speed limit for I-495 in Maryland is generally 55 miles per hour. Thus, the bill effectively sets the speed limit for interstates and expressways that connect to I-495 at 55 miles per hour (for at least 5 miles). Because I-270, I-295, and Route 50 all have speed limits that are already set at 55 miles per hour at the point of connection with I-495, the bill only has a limited effect on those roadways. (However, SHA may need to ensure that matching speed limits are in place for at least 5 miles, pursuant to the bill’s requirement.) At the point of connection with I-495, however, the speed limit for I-95 is 65 miles per hour. Under the bill, that speed limit must be lowered to 55 miles per hour in order to match the maximum speed limit of I-495.

Accordingly, the bill likely results in an increase in general fund revenues (at least in the short term) as additional drivers are issued citations for speeding. Given the limited area affected by the bill, however, any increase in general fund revenues is expected to be minimal.

SHA also advises that additional expenditures are necessary in order to implement the bill’s signage changes (specifically, adding new signage and replacing any signage that is incompatible with the bill’s requirements). Assuming that one set of signs is installed every

0.5 miles in both directions of travel, the total cost of these changes is estimated at \$157,989 in fiscal 2022 only. The major cost elements are shown in **Exhibit 1**.

---

**Exhibit 1**  
**Additional Transportation Trust Fund Expenditures under the Bill**  
**Fiscal 2022**

Materials	\$85,850
Equipment	36,421
Labor	24,314
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$146,585</b>
Overhead Costs	11,404
<b>Total FY 2022 Expenditures</b>	<b>\$157,989</b>

Source: Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

---

**Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** SB 55 of 2018 received an unfavorable report by the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Montgomery and Prince George's counties; Department of State Police; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 25, 2021  
rh/ljm

---

Analysis by: Eric F. Pierce

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