

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

House Bill 617

(Delegate Fair, *et al.*)

Environment and Transportation

Judicial Proceedings

City of Frederick - Noise Abatement Monitoring Systems - Authorization

This bill authorizes the use of noise abatement monitoring systems in the City of Frederick to record violations of State law governing maximum sound limits of motor vehicles. Existing penalties, requirements, and limitations that apply to the systems used by Montgomery and Prince George’s counties under current law also apply to the systems used by the City of Frederick under the bill. The City of Frederick must report – by December 1, 2027 – to the Governor and General Assembly on its implementation of the systems, as specified. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026, and terminates on the termination of Chapters 624 and 625 of 2024 (currently set for June 30, 2028).**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund revenues from contested cases in the District Court may increase minimally in FY 2027 through 2029 to the extent that additional noise abatement monitoring systems are installed, as discussed below. General fund expenditures are not anticipated to be materially affected, as discussed below.

Local Effect: Revenues and expenditures for the City of Frederick may increase in FY 2027 through 2029 to the extent that any noise abatement monitoring systems are installed pursuant to the bill’s authority, as discussed below.

Small Business Effect: Potential minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary: By December 1, 2027, the City of Frederick must report to the Governor and General Assembly on:

- through October 1, 2027, (1) the time period during which noise abatement monitoring systems authorized under the bill were used in the city and (2) the number of warnings and citations issued as a result of violations recorded by noise abatement monitoring systems in the city over the reported time period, by location and date;
- the costs associated with implementing and operating noise abatement monitoring systems and the revenue collected on a monthly basis as a result of violations recorded by the systems;
- appropriate locations for the deployment of noise abatement monitoring systems;
- the performance and reliability of noise abatement monitoring systems used by the city; and
- the effectiveness of noise abatement monitoring systems in reducing noise produced by motor vehicles in the city and in areas where the systems were implemented and used.

Current Law:

Noise Abatement Monitoring Systems

Chapters 624 and 625 of 2024 authorized the use of noise abatement monitoring systems in both Montgomery and Prince George's counties. Under the Acts, any such system may only be implemented if its use is authorized by the governing body of the county by local law enacted after reasonable notice and a public hearing. Originally, Chapters 624 and 625 terminated June 30, 2026; however, the termination date was extended to June 30, 2028, by Chapter 712 of 2025 and Chapter 11 of the special session of 2025.

A person liable for a violation enforced by a noise abatement monitoring system is subject to a warning notice for a first offense and a civil penalty not exceeding \$75 for a second or subsequent offense. The Acts include additional requirements and specifications for the use of the systems, including:

- requiring fine revenues to be paid directly to the appropriate political subdivision, unless a case is contested in the District Court (in which case the fine revenues are paid to the District Court);

- authorizing the counties to recover the costs of implementing and administering the systems from the fines collected and requiring any balance to be used solely for public safety purposes, as specified;
- requiring the counties to provide specified notice to the general public before activating a system;
- requiring the counties to designate an official or employee to respond to questions and concerns about the systems;
- requiring system operators to receive training and be certified by the system manufacturer, as specified;
- requiring operators to complete daily logs, as specified;
- requiring the systems to undergo annual calibration checks, as specified;
- establishing penalty amounts and requiring the District Court to prescribe a uniform citation form;
- establishing other requirements related to violations, administration of the penalties, the processing of citations, the admissibility of the recordings as evidence, and information the District Court may consider in defense of a violation; and
- establishing reporting requirements.

Sound Limits

A person is prohibited from driving (or permitting to be driven) a motor vehicle on a highway in violation of maximum sound limits established under State law. A violation is a misdemeanor with a maximum \$500 fine. The prepayment penalty is \$60.

State Fiscal Effect: Assuming that noise abatement monitoring systems are installed by the City of Frederick pursuant to the bill's authority, the total number of citations issued may increase in fiscal 2027 and 2028. As a result of this potential increase in citations, the number of individuals opting for a trial in District Court may increase. Accordingly, general fund revenues may increase minimally as fine revenues paid by individuals convicted in District Court are paid into the general fund. Any increase in revenues likely only occurs through fiscal 2029 (although the bill terminates June 30, 2028, consistent with the current termination date for Chapters 624 and 625, it is assumed that associated impacts continue for a brief period as any issued citations are processed and paid).

It is anticipated that any additional workload resulting from the bill's requirements does not materially affect general fund expenditures for the District Court.

The Judiciary advises that the significant expansion of automated enforcement systems in the State in recent years necessitates an upgrade to its case management system to improve citation intake and payment processing. For locally operated automated enforcement systems, the District Court administers citations and the payment of fines from contested citations only. For automated enforcement systems operated by a State agency, the

District Court administers citations and the payment of fines for both contested and uncontested citations. The court currently processes these citations through a manual workflow that has struggled to keep pace with the expansion of automated enforcement systems. The Judiciary estimates the cost of an information technology upgrade to automate the process at approximately \$1.4 million; additional staffing costs may also be incurred.

However, because the Judiciary's need is not exclusively attributable to the bill, but rather due to the general expansion of automated enforcement systems, these costs are not reflected in this analysis.

Local Fiscal Effect: To the extent that the City of Frederick chooses to implement a noise abatement monitoring system program pursuant to the authority granted by the bill:

- expenditures increase to install the devices and required signs and for other administrative expenses that may be incurred for the operation of the program (*e.g.*, mailing or contractual costs);
- revenues increase as citations are issued and penalty revenues are paid to the city; and
- expenditures further increase as the penalty revenues are used for authorized purposes.

As noted above, because Chapters 624 and 625 terminate June 30, 2028, any fiscal impacts for the city are likely experienced only through fiscal 2029 (under the assumption above).

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 23, 2026
jg/jkb Third Reader - April 9, 2026

Analysis by: Richard L. Duncan

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

