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SB 11

March 23, 2023

TO: Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Interim Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: Motor Vehicles – The Establishment of School Zones

POSITION: Oppose

Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) strongly opposes Senate Bill 11.

Senate Bill 11 will severely impact the implementation and operations of safety measures in school zones, specifically the deployment of automated traffic enforcement cameras. The legislation would hamper Baltimore City's efforts to improve safety within established school zones. Research conducted by Baltimore City Department of Transportation identified 163 automated speed enforcement cameras deployed within school zones surrounding Baltimore City Public Schools. Of the 163 locations, 87% are located beyond the 500-foot radius that Senate Bill 11 looks to establish, meaning impact to the City's existing automated speed enforcement program would be significant. As drafted, the legislation may require Baltimore City to remove and readvertise the vast majority of our automated speed enforcement locations – many of which were installed at the request of local communities.

The research is clear – automated speed enforcement cameras improve safety by encouraging drivers to travel at slower, safer speeds. A 2010 study showed that there is a reduction of the likelihood of a fatal and serious injury from 44% to 11% on corridors where automated speed enforcement cameras are operational (Wilson et al. 2010). Furthermore, additional research shows a clear correlation of crashes involving higher speeds leading to higher likelihood of dangerous and fatal crashes ([AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, 2011](#)). Nationally, almost one-fifth of children 14 and younger killed in traffic crashes were pedestrians, and pedestrians are 1.5 times more likely than vehicle occupants to be killed in a car crash ([MDH, 2017](#)). As of 2019, the most recent year for which data is available, motor vehicle crashes were the leading cause of accidental child deaths in the state, accounting for 21 deaths or 12% percent of all child fatalities in Maryland (Maryland State Child Fatality Review, 2020).

Additionally, data collected by Baltimore City Department of Transportation's ATVES Division demonstrates the positive impact that automated speed enforcement facilities have on the corridors where they are installed. For example, in 2020 automated speed enforcement cameras were installed on both northbound and southbound directions of the 2500-2600 blocks of Harford Road, serving Reach Partnership High School. The speed limit for this portion of Harford Road is posted at 30 mph. This location began issuing citations for driving 12 mph or more over the speed limit in October of 2020, issuing precisely 1541 citations the first month of operation. More recently, data demonstrates a decline of monthly citations being issued to precisely 354 during the month of December 2022. Furthermore, the average rate of speed per citation dropped from 45.0 mph in October 2020 to 44.4 mph in December of 2022, meaning even cars that continue to speed are doing so at a slower pace. The reduction in speed along the corridor has undeniably improved safety for students commuting to and from Reach Partnership High School.

In summary, Senate Bill 11 would make it harder for Baltimore City to make our public streets and corridors safe for all road users. In recent years, Baltimore City has observed as significant increase in the number of traffic calming requests submitted by City residents – over 1400 unique traffic calming requests were submitted to Baltimore City Department of Transportation during calendar year 2022 alone. Ultimately, neighborhoods across Baltimore City desire action to mitigate aggressive speeding within established school zones. My administration is committed to meeting the demands of City residents towards making our streets safer.

For these reasons, BCA urges an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 11.