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DEPUTY SPEAKER PRO TEM

Appropriations Committee

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Capital Budget

House Chair, Joint Audit and
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 665

Montgomery County – Speed Monitoring Systems – High-Risk Highways
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
March 27, 1:00pm

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, colleagues, thank you for the opportunity to present on my bill HB665, a bill to provide safer streets throughout Montgomery County, Maryland.

HB 665 will:

1. place speed cameras on High Injury Network (HIN) locations in Montgomery County that are at high risk for motor vehicle crashes;
2. require any fines collected to be used to fund the study, design, and construction of safety-related efforts; and
3. require an evaluation of the speed monitoring systems to determine their efficacy every 5 years.

In 2022, Montgomery County had [3,629 collisions result in injury and 44 result in death](#), both of which have increased from 2021. From 2011 through 2020, the number of speeding related fatalities in Maryland is higher than the national average – [29 percent in Maryland versus 26 percent nationwide](#).

In its commitment to eliminate transportation fatalities and serious injury by 2030, the Montgomery Countywide Policy and Planning Vision Zero team studied the [county's crash history](#) and conditions that lead to incidents on our roadways. There were two key findings from these studies:

1. Most serious injuries and fatalities are located along the county's arterials, such as Georgia Avenue, Old Georgetown Road, and Veirs Mill Road.
 - a. These roads have speed limits that [exceed 35 mph](#) in most if not all segments and these roads also include both residential and business districts. To limit the placement of speed cameras to residential areas and school zones, ignores the

fact that “On a per-intersection or per-roadway segment basis, crash risk is highest in the county’s urban areas, particularly for pedestrian and bicycle crash types.”¹

2. While bicycle and pedestrian crashes are less frequent than motor vehicle crashes, they are more likely to result in a serious injury or fatality.

As speed increases, so does the risk of severe injury and death. The risk of death for a pedestrian hit at 23 mph is 10 percent but jumps up to 50 percent at 42 mph. So even if a driver goes at the posted speed limit of 40 or 45 mph, in a crash involving a pedestrian, that pedestrian has approximately a 50 percent chance of death. Now, if the driver is going 50 mph (so driving anywhere between 5-10 mph over the speed limit), that same pedestrian has a 75% chance of death. Once speeds hit 58 mph, the risk of death is 90%. With 45 percent of the U.S. population admitting to driving more than 15 mph over the posted speed limit, in areas in which the speed limit is 40 or 45 mph, we can expect drivers going at speeds of 55 to 60 mph – meaning a pedestrian struck on those roads is likely to have a 90% risk of death.

Luckily, Montgomery County already has a successful automated speed enforcement program. The program began in 2007 on streets with speed limits of 35mph or lower and school zones. In 2009, the state increased the enforcement threshold from 11 to 12mph over the speed limit. And, in 2012, the county launched its corridor approach, in which cameras are moved periodically along a roadway segment. The long-term effects of the program were studied and found:

- Speed cameras were associated with a 10% reduction in mean speeds and a 62% reduction in the likelihood that a vehicle was traveling more than 10 mph above the speed limit at camera sites.
- The overall effect of the camera program in its modified form, including both the law change and the corridor approach, was a 39% reduction in the likelihood that a crash resulted in an incapacitating or fatal injury. ²

While there are varying factors that can contribute to crash injuries and fatalities, we have seen an increase in the number of collisions total (and injuries and fatalities), we know nearly a third of fatalities were speeding-related, and when a collision involves a non-motorist, it is more likely to result in severe injury or death. MC 15-24 would address these issues on our most dangerous roadways and increase compliance with speed limits. If we are going to meet Vision Zero, we need to take every step to ameliorate the dangerous conditions on our roads.

¹ “Montgomery County traffic study highlights most dangerous roads in effort to reduce future crashes.” July 26, 2022 <https://www.wusa9.com/article/traffic/predictive-safety-analysis-final-report-explores-dangerous-roadways-in-montgomery-county/65-7caa0f50-59a6-424e-b3a9-2f55d98bdcda>

² <https://www.iihs.org/news/detail/speed-cameras-reduce-injury-crashes-in-maryland-county-iihs-study-shows>

Montgomery County is prioritizing High Injury Network Projects in their [Vision Zero 2024-2025 Work Plan](#) that focuses on implementing safety countermeasures on identified high-risk road segments and intersections which the County must coordinate with the State for state-maintained portions of the network. Vision Zero requires a proactive approach to place limited resources in areas with the highest return on safety and equitable distribution compared to request-driven programming. Road safety audits can reduce crashes upwards of 60%.

I'm proud to be partnering with the Montgomery County Police Department, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation, and community advocates to advance this legislation and I urge a favorable report.

The House of Delegates voted 106-26 in favor of HB 665. I ask for a favorable report of HB 665.