



STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

ARUNA K. MILLER
LT. GOVERNOR

February 22, 2024

The Honorable William Smith
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

***RE: Letter of Support – Senate Bill 479 – Motor Vehicles – Work Zone Speed Control Systems
– Revisions (Maryland Road Worker Protection Act of 2024)***

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher and Judicial Proceedings Committee members:

The Moore-Miller Administration strongly supports Senate Bill 479 as it implements the legislative recommendations of the Governor’s Work Zone Safety Work Group to protect Maryland roadway workers and initiates a culture change among motorists to adopt safer driving behaviors.

Throughout Maryland on any given day, there are approximately 1,000 State employees and contractors working to maintain and improve Maryland’s roadways at more than 300 locations across the State. Thousands more individuals also work on locally maintained roads including local government employees and contractors, utility workers, and other workers who place themselves in harms way to maintain and improve our critical transportation infrastructure. Last year, there were more than 1,200 crashes in work zones in state maintained roadways across Maryland, averaging more than three crashes per day. These crashes claimed the lives of eight workers, including the deadliest work zone crash in Maryland history in March that claimed the lives of six roadway workers on I-695 in Baltimore, a July crash that killed one worker on MD 343 in Dorchester County, and a December crash that killed one worker on I-495 in Montgomery County. These statistics are more than just numbers – they represent family members, friends, and dedicated workers that deserve a comprehensive strategy to improve driver awareness and safety on our roadways.

The Governor’s Work Zone Safety Work Group (WZSWG) was announced in April 2023 and included a diverse group of stakeholders with expertise in the transportation sector including law enforcement officers, labor leaders, the contracting community, elected officials, traffic engineers, highway safety experts, and roadway workers with direct experience in work zones.

In November 2023, after the work of 19 meetings and assessing the results of a work zone safety survey that reached 2,200 Marylanders, the WZSWG announced its final set of recommendations, which included proposed budgetary, regulatory, and legislative actions. Senate Bill 479 puts the legislative recommendations into action by increasing fines for work zone speed camera violations, prohibiting double citations, expanding work zone speed camera enforcement flexibility, and requiring the reinvestment of citation revenue for work zone safety. Senate Bill 479 will significantly increase enforcement measures in work zones by increasing the speed camera penalty for speeding in a work zone. Currently, the speed camera fine for speeding in Maryland is \$40, which is the lowest in the nation. Senate Bill 479 raises the fine to \$290, which aligns with the fine levied on a driver that is pulled over for speeding in a work zone by a law enforcement officer. Additionally, Senate Bill 479 increases fines for repeat offenders that continuously put workers at risk. In Maryland, we want motorists to know that we take roadway safety seriously as they travel through work zones.

By removing outdated restrictions that limit how the State and local governments can implement and enforce work zone speed camera violations, like the requirement that all speed cameras be manned by a physical person, this gives the State and local governments more flexibility to operate speed camera programs in work zones. This additional flexibility can allow cameras to be placed at multiple locations throughout a work zone and force drivers to change their behavior and slow down throughout the duration of a work zone versus at a single point in time or provide protection for workers in work zones where it is difficult to place law enforcement personnel such as roadwork on an exit ramp. Finally, Senate Bill 479 reinvests the revenue from work zone speed enforcement fines back into highway and work zone safety programs that support our Administration's efforts to change driver behavior and reduce crashes, fatalities, and injuries on our roadways. Attaining Maryland's goal of zero motor vehicle-related fatalities or serious injuries by 2030 will be supported by the increased, targeted funding.

Bold action must be taken to spark a culture change and Senate Bill 479 represents the State's commitment to protecting roadway workers and ensuring that they are able to go home at the end of each day. For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report of Senate Bill 479.

Sincerely,



Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller