
February 22, 2024

The Honorable William C. Smith Jr.
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 and Committee members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) strongly supports Senate Bill 479 and offers the following information for the Committee’s consideration during its deliberations.

Senate Bill 479 makes several important changes to the law governing the use of work zone speed control systems to capture and enforce speed violations in a work zone. Specifically, the bill:

- Alters the distribution of revenue from civil fines collected through work zone speed control systems and distributes a portion of the funds from fines for highway and work zone safety purposes;
- Clarifies that a work zone speed control system may be manned or unmanned;
- Clarifies that a system operator does not need to be present on-site or remotely when the work zone speed control system is in use;
- Establishes a policy for the use of multiple work zone speed control systems within a single work zone;
- Increases the maximum penalty for a civil citation and provides for a tiered system of citations based on infractions; and
- Requires reports on pilot programs operated by the State Highway Administration to test new technologies that could be used to monitor speed in work zones.

Over the past five years, Maryland has seen a spike in roadway fatalities and injuries, including in work zones. Throughout Maryland on any given day, there are an average of 1,000 roadway workers improving Maryland’s transportation infrastructure at more than 300 worksites, in addition to law enforcement personnel, who assist at these sites. Last year, there were more than 1,200 crashes in work zones in the State, averaging more than three crashes per day, including the deadliest work zone crash in Maryland history in March that claimed the lives of six roadway workers on I-695 in Baltimore and two crashes in December that killed two roadway workers.

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These statistics are more than just numbers – they represent family members, friends, and dedicated workers that deserve an aggressive strategy to improve awareness and safety on our roadways.

MDOT supports Senate Bill 479 which implements the legislative recommendations from the Moore-Miller Administration's Work Zone Safety Work Group (WZSWG). The WZSWG included a diverse group of stakeholders, including members from across MDOT, legislators, law enforcement officers, and workers with direct experience in work zones. Safety is the top priority at MDOT, for all users of our systems, including those that risk their lives every day to maintain and construct the facilities that citizens across Maryland use every day. Senate Bill 479 represents important and bold action in protecting this critical workforce and transforming driver behavior in our State.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully urges a favorable report of Senate Bill 479.

Sincerely,

Paul J. Wiedefeld
Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation

Chrissy Nizer
Administrator
Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration

Will Pines
Administrator
Maryland State Highway Administration