



**AAA Mid-Atlantic's Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 479
Motor Vehicles - Work Zone Speed Control Systems - Revisions
(Maryland Road Worker Protection Act of 2024)
*Sponsor: The President (By Request - Administration) et al***

- AAA Mid-Atlantic supports [Senate Bill 479, Motor Vehicles – Work Zone Speed Control Systems – Revisions \(Maryland Road Worker Protection Act of 2024\)](#), which would make several changes to Maryland's existing automated enforcement law in work zones, including increased fines and designation of a portion of fines to police and the Transportation Trust Fund for highway and work zone safety purposes.
- AAA Mid-Atlantic has been supportive of Maryland's automated speed enforcement systems for nearly two decades, working with the legislature in 2005 to launch Maryland's first pilot program for automated speed enforcement in residential areas and school zones in Montgomery County.
- Again in 2009, we supported the expansion of automated speed enforcement camera systems statewide for use in work and school zones, recognizing that police officers can't be all places at once and believing that automated enforcement could be a significant safety tool to supplement, not replace law enforcement efforts to reduce speeding.
- In 2012, AAA was appointed to represent drivers and make recommendations on Baltimore's Automated Traffic Violation Enforcement System Task Force, which was created to review Baltimore City's automated traffic enforcement systems, which were under scrutiny after many issues with their automated enforcement program.
- The Task Force's evaluation resulted in legislative changes in 2013, which included AAA's recommendations to fix the system and restore the public's trust.
- Last spring, AAA was honored to be appointed to the [Governor's Work Zone Safety Work Group \(WZSWG\)](#) with other traffic safety stakeholders to recommend measures to improve safety in work zones and to protect the lives of roadway workers and first responders.
- While we have seen some success with the use of speed cameras over the years, work zones remain a very dangerous place for highway workers and drivers, as drivers speed through work zones, in many cases with little regard for safety or the lives of those working there.
- This was never more evident than last March, when six roadway workers lost their lives in a work zone crash on Interstate 695 in Baltimore County.

- According to the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration \(NHTSA\) Fatality Analysis Reporting System \(FARS\)](#), fatalities in roadway work zones increased nearly 11% from 2020 to 2021, with deaths rising from 863 to 956. Tragically, data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates 108 roadway workers were killed on the job in 2021.
- Work zones are inherently dangerous any time of day for workers **and** motorists so anything the State can do to further help remind motorists they are traveling through a work zone and are required to slow down and obey the posted speed limit will help save lives.
- It should be noted that drivers and passengers accounted for more than 80% of the 956 fatalities in work zones in 2021, according to FARS data from NHTSA.
- Recent research by the [AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety](#), found that even modestly higher speeds at the time of a crash dramatically increase the chances of severe injury and death.
- Current automated citations for speed violations in work zones are \$40, which is the lowest in the nation. Passage of SB 479 would increase the fine to \$290 for a first or second offense in a calendar year. The fine would increase to \$1000 with a third violation in a year.
- We support the use of automated enforcement systems that are fair and reasonable, don't undermine or violate the public trust, and are safety-based.
- AAA Mid-Atlantic remains committed to the safety of highway workers and motorists. We are hopeful that increased fines will not only slow motorists down in work zones, but increase their awareness and encourage safe, courteous driving on all Maryland roadways.
- We respectfully urge the Committee to give **SB 479 a favorable report.**

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