

Department of Fiscal Services  
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 1360 (Delegate Ciliberti, *et al.*)  
Commerce and Government Matters

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**Vehicle Laws - Violation of Speed Restrictions - Fines Doubled**

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This bill doubles the fines currently established by the Chief Judge of the District Court of Maryland for the violations of specified speed restrictions under the Maryland Vehicle Law.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Potential significant increase in general fund revenues and expenditures as discussed below.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None. The bill would not directly affect small businesses.

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**Fiscal Analysis**

**State Effect:** Under the Maryland Vehicle Law, the maximum penalty for each of these offenses is \$500. The Chief Judge of the District Court of Maryland establishes fines for defendants who choose to prepay for the offense rather than appear in court to contest the violation. The bill doubles these fines for certain driving offenses. **Exhibit 1** lists each offense, the number of violations in fiscal 1996, the current fine, and the fine under the bill. Doubling the fine for exceeding the maximum speed limit by 40 miles or more results in a fine of \$1,000 which is over the statutory limit of \$500.

**Exhibit 1**

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Type of Offense	Number of Violations in FY 1996	Current Fine*	HB 1360*
Driving vehicle in excess of reasonable and prudent speed on hwy.	4,935	\$45	\$90
Failure to control veh. speed on hwy. to avoid collision	10,716	\$90	\$180
Failure to reduce veh. speed at intersection without traffic device	16	\$45	\$90
Failure to reduce speed at railroad grade crossing	6	\$45	\$90
Failure to reduce speed on curve	165	\$45	\$90
Failure to reduce speed on crest of grade	9	\$45	\$90
Failure to reduce speed on narrow and winding roadway	20	\$45	\$90
Failure to reduce speed in dangerous weather, highway conditions	699	\$45	\$90
Driving vehicle on hwy. at speed in excess of:	385,685		
1 to 9 miles		\$40	\$80
10 to 19 miles		\$50	\$100
20 to 29 miles		\$110	\$220
30 to 39 miles		\$250	\$500
40 miles and over		\$500	\$1,000**
Exceeding highway work zone speed limit	63	\$250	\$500
Driving school bus carrying passengers at speed more than 50 mph	2	\$100	\$220
Exceeding max. posted speed on bridge, elevated structure	79	\$40	\$100
Reckless driving	3,346	\$250	\$500
Negligent driving	11,774	\$100	\$200

\* A \$20 fee for court costs is added to each fine (regardless of whether the defendant appears in court to contest the violation or pays the fine directly).

\*\* indicates a fine, when doubled, that exceeds the maximum \$500 allowed by the Maryland Vehicle Law

Source: The District Court of Maryland

In fiscal 1996 there was a total of 417,516 violations of these offenses. The number of resulting convictions is unknown. The District Court estimates that \$19 million in fine revenues was generated from these violations in fiscal 1996. Thus, doubling the fines conceivably could result in an additional \$19 million in revenues, based on fiscal 1996 experience. However, increasing the motor vehicle fines will result in an increase in the number of individuals who fail to pay their fines or elect to appear in court to contest the violation. Accordingly, it is unlikely that doubling the assessed fines would result in a doubling of the revenues collected. Further, depending upon the magnitude of the increase in

the number of individuals who appear before the court, expenditures could increase for additional judges, courtroom staff, and facilities to handle the increased workload.

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**Information Source(s):** Judiciary (District Court of Maryland), Department of Transportation (Motor Vehicle Administration), Department of Fiscal Services

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Analysis by: Christina H. Kim  
Reviewed by: John Rixey

Direct Inquiries to:  
John Rixey, Coordinating Analyst  
(410) 841-3710  
(301) 858-3710