

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 472 (Senator Ruben)

Judicial Proceedings

Vehicle Laws - Speeding Violations - Increasing Fines

This bill requires the Chief Judge of the District Court to double the fines in effect as of October 1, 1997 for exceeding the speed limit in an under 35 miles per hour speed zone. The bill also requires the Chief Judge to annually adjust the fines for exceeding the speed limit in an under 35 miles per hour speed zone as necessary to maintain the relationship established by the bill between the fines for speeding in an under 35 miles per hour speed zone and the fines specified for other speed limit violations.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Indeterminate increase in general fund revenues. Potential indeterminate increase in general fund expenditures.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Fiscal Analysis

State Effect: The bill would result in an increase in speeding fine revenues, which go to general funds. However, the magnitude of such an increase cannot be reliably predicted at this time. Statistics are not available on speeding charges issued in under 35 miles per hour speed zones, because speeding violations are categorized by the number of miles per hour above the speed limit. The currently-effective fine schedule is as follows:

<u>Exceeding speed limit by</u>	<u>Fine</u>
1 to 9 miles per hour	\$60
10 to 19 miles per hour	\$70
20 to 29 miles per hour	\$135
30 to 39 miles per hour	\$270
40 miles per hour and over	\$520

In fiscal 1997, a total of 391,108 speeding citations were issued, of which 197,557 fines were prepaid and 144,284 went to trial (49,267 were pending as of December 17, 1997). Figures for speeding fine revenues received are not readily available.

It has been the experience of the District Court that whenever vehicle fines are increased, there is a significant increase in the number of defendants who elect to come to court rather than prepay the fine, which affects the amount of revenue collected. This could also cause an increase in operating expenditures for the District Court and could contribute to the need for additional judges, courtroom staff, and courtroom facilities.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 9, 1998

lc

Analysis by: Claire E. Rooney

Reviewed by: John Rixey

Direct Inquiries to:

John Rixey, Coordinating Analyst

(410) 841-3710

(301) 858-3710