

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2003 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 571

(Delegate Frush)

Environmental Matters

Judicial Proceedings

Vehicle Laws - Traffic Control Signal Monitoring Systems - Yellow Signals

This bill provides that the agency primarily responsible for traffic control at an intersection monitored by a traffic control signal monitoring system (red light camera) must ensure that the length of time that a yellow light is displayed before changing to a red light is set in accordance with regulations adopted by the State Highway Administration, consistent with standards or guidelines established by the Federal Highway Administration. The State Highway Administration must adopt the regulations by October 1, 2003.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill's requirements could be handled with existing resources.

Local Effect: Potential minimal impact for some local governments.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Minimum standards for the display of a yellow traffic light before the traffic signal changes to a red traffic light are not established in State law. The law provides that vehicular traffic facing a steady yellow signal is warned that the movement that occurred under a green signal is ending and a red traffic signal will be shown immediately after the yellow signal. Vehicular traffic facing a steady red signal must stop at the near side of the intersection at a clearly marked stop line. If there is no stop line, traffic must stop before entering any crosswalk. If there is no crosswalk, traffic must stop before entering the intersection. Traffic must remain stopped, subject to certain exceptions, until a signal to proceed is displayed.

A driver who enters an intersection on a steady red signal and is recorded by a traffic control signal monitoring system is subject to a civil penalty not to exceed \$100, unless the driver receives a citation from a police officer at the time of the violation. A violation recorded only by a traffic control monitoring system is not a moving violation and may not be considered for purposes of motor vehicle insurance coverage. However, if the civil penalty is not paid and the violation is not contested, the Motor Vehicle Administration may refuse to register or reregister the vehicle, or may suspend the registration of the motor vehicle.

Background: Standards regarding the duration of traffic lights are set by the National Institute of Transportation Engineers. Standards are set based on approach speeds and the grade of the road.

Local Expenditures: For the majority of local governments contacted, the bill's requirements could be handled with existing resources. Montgomery County does advise, however, that it would cost the county \$2,000 to reconfirm the traffic signal timing at 45 intersections.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None. However, an identical bill, SB 193, was referred to Judicial Proceedings. The Senate passed SB 193, with amendments, and the bill was referred to the Environmental Matters Committee.

Information Source(s): Montgomery County, Prince George's County, Caroline County, Calvert County, Howard County, Department of State Police, Department of Transportation, Baltimore City, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 7, 2003
mld/jr Revised - House Third Reader - April 7, 2003

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