

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2015 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 410 (Delegate Parrott, *et al.*)  
Environment and Transportation

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Traffic Control Signal Monitoring Systems - Application to Right Turns

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This bill specifies that traffic control signal monitoring system (red light camera) enforcement does not apply to a vehicle that makes a right turn in an intersection.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** General fund revenues and District Court caseloads may decrease minimally beginning in FY 2016 from any reduction in the number of red light camera citations, unless offset by the increase in the percentage of citations that result in a trial (and payment to the general fund rather than to the local jurisdiction). Overall, the bill is not anticipated to materially affect State operations or finances.

**Local Effect:** Local government red light camera citation revenues may decrease, potentially significantly, as a result of the generation of fewer red light citations and from any increase in the percentage of contested citations (with fines paid to the State general fund). **This bill may impose a mandate on a unit of local government.**

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** Unless the driver of a motor vehicle receives a citation from a police officer at the time of the violation, the owner or driver of a vehicle recorded by a red light monitoring system entering an intersection against a red signal in violation of the Maryland Vehicle Law is subject to a civil penalty of up to \$100. Red light camera enforcement applies to a violation of specified Maryland Vehicle Law requirements applicable to a vehicle approaching a steady circular red signal or arrow, including (1) stopping at a clearly

marked stop line, or crosswalk if there is no stop line, or intersection if there is no crosswalk and (2) remaining stopped until a signal allows the vehicle to proceed.

A driver is specifically authorized under the Maryland Vehicle Law to cautiously enter an intersection to make a right turn (or left turn from a one-way street to another one-way street) after stopping at a steady red light, unless a sign otherwise prohibits the turn.

**State Fiscal Effect:** General fund revenues and District Court caseloads may decrease beginning in fiscal 2016 from any reduction in the number of red light camera citations *issued*. It is unclear whether, and to what extent, the number of red light camera citations might decrease under the bill. As noted above, a red light camera citation is only supposed to be based on the failure to stop or remain stopped at the appropriate place. A vehicle is authorized under the Maryland Vehicle Law to, unless specifically prohibited, make a right turn on a red signal, and a red light camera does not alter this authorization and is not supposed to record a violation based on a right turn. However, to the extent that the bill results in greater vigilance in the review of red light citations or a change in a jurisdiction's red light camera system enforcement, the number of citations generated may decrease slightly. Thus, general fund revenues from contested cases following the issuance of a red light camera citation may decrease minimally, unless offset by an increase in the *percentage* of citations that are contested. A reliable estimate of the impact on general fund revenues or District Court caseloads cannot be made, but the overall impact on State finances and operations is anticipated to be minimal.

**Local Revenues:** Local government red light camera citation revenues may decrease minimally as a result of the generation of fewer red light citations and from any increase in the percentage of contested citations in which fines are paid to the State general fund. As noted above, red light cameras are not currently supposed to generate citations based on a vehicle's right turn following a stop. Several jurisdictions that provided responses to the request for information for this fiscal and policy note indicated that the bill is not anticipated to have a material impact on red light camera program operations or finances. However, Montgomery County advises that it may no longer allow red light camera enforcement in right lanes under the bill, which may result in a loss of roughly one-third of citations and more than \$1 million annually, unless offset by greater enforcement of other lanes in other locations.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** cities of Baltimore, Bowie, and Takoma Park; Baltimore, Charles, Howard, and Montgomery counties; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 25, 2015  
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