

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2018 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Third Reader - Revised**

Senate Bill 872

(Senator Mathias)

Judicial Proceedings

Environment and Transportation

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**Vehicle Laws – Special Event Zones – Worcester County**

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This emergency bill authorizes the State Highway Administration (SHA), on its own initiative or at the request of a local authority, to designate an area on a State highway in Worcester County as a “special event zone.” Likewise, a local authority in Worcester County may designate an area on a highway under its jurisdiction as a “special event zone.” In either case, SHA or the local authority may reduce speed limits in the affected location after a determination that the change is necessary for public safety. The bill establishes a new prohibition on speeding within such zones, which is punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000. The lower speed limit for a special event zone takes effect when posted.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** General fund revenues increase minimally due to more citations for speeding and likely higher fines in the affected areas. Expenditures are not materially affected. Enforcement can be handled with existing resources.

**Local Effect:** Finances in Worcester County and municipalities within the county are not materially affected. The bill facilitates enforcement, which can be handled with existing resources.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

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**Analysis**

**Bill Summary:** A “special event” is any automotive or motor vehicle event occurring on (or in close proximity to) a highway that (1) has been permitted or approved by a unit of local government or (2) is expected to have 1,000 or more individuals in attendance,

regardless of whether the event has been permitted or approved by a unit of local government. A “special event zone” is an area on (or alongside) a highway that is appropriately marked by warning signs or traffic control devices.

**Current Law:** Unless there is a special danger that requires a lower speed, the maximum lawful speeds on a State highway are (1) 15 miles per hour in alleys in Baltimore County; (2) 30 miles per hour on all highways in a business district and on undivided highways in a residential district; (3) 35 miles per hour on divided highways in a residential district; (4) 50 miles per hour on undivided highways in other locations; and (6) 55 miles per hour on divided highways in other locations. A maximum speed limit of more than 70 miles per hour may not be established on any highway in the State.

If, on the basis of an engineering and traffic investigation, a local authority determines that a maximum speed is greater or less than is reasonable or safe under existing conditions on any part of a highway in its jurisdiction, the local authority may establish a reasonable and safe maximum speed limit for that part of the highway, which may:

- decrease the limit at an intersection;
- increase the limit in an urban district to not more than 50 miles per hour;
- decrease the speed limit in an urban district; or
- decrease the limit outside an urban district to not less than 25 miles per hour.

Except in Baltimore City, any alteration by a local authority of a maximum speed limit on a part or extension of a State highway is not effective until it is approved by SHA.

An engineering and traffic investigation is not required to conform a speed limit in effect on December 31, 1974, to one of the specified speed limits established by statute.

**Background:** The Town of Ocean City hosts automotive and motor events in close proximity to highways, with crowds often swelling beyond manageable limits and disorderly conduct becoming a greater concern. The bill is intended to assist law enforcement officers in managing such events and restoring or ensuring safety of the public.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** HB 1406 (Delegate Carozza, *et al.*) - Environment and Transportation.

**Information Source(s):** Worcester County; Town of Ocean City; Maryland Association of Counties; Department of State Police; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 26, 2018  
mm/ljm Third Reader - March 29, 2018  
Revised - Amendment(s) - March 29, 2018

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