

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 500

(Senator McCray)(By Request - Baltimore City
Administration)

Judicial Proceedings

Baltimore City - Speed Monitoring Systems - Interstate 83

This bill increases the number of speed monitoring systems (*i.e.*, speed cameras) that may be placed on Interstate 83 in Baltimore City from two to four. The bill also makes permanent the authorization to place speed cameras on Interstate 83 in Baltimore City by repealing the termination date of Chapter 628 of 2021, which originally authorized the placement of the speed cameras on the highway. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2025.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: No effect in FY 2025. General fund revenues increase beginning in FY 2026 due to additional contested cases in District Court, as discussed below. Any additional caseload for the District Court can be handled using existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: Revenues and expenditures for Baltimore City increase, likely significantly, beginning in FY 2026 assuming one or both additional cameras are installed, as discussed below. Expenditures may also be incurred as early as FY 2025 if the authorization is used immediately. Because the speed camera program terminates beginning FY 2027 absent the bill, revenues and expenditures for Baltimore City increase significantly beginning in that year.

Small Business Effect: Potential minimal.

Analysis

Current Law:

Speed Monitoring Systems – Generally

State law authorizes the use of various automated monitoring systems, including traffic control system monitoring systems, speed monitoring systems, school bus monitoring systems, vehicle height monitoring systems, and work zone speed control systems.

Speed monitoring systems must be authorized in a local jurisdiction by the governing body of the jurisdiction (but only after reasonable notice and a public hearing). Before activating a speed monitoring system, a local jurisdiction must publish notice of the location of the speed monitoring system on its website and in a newspaper of general circulation in the jurisdiction. In addition, the jurisdiction must also ensure that each sign that designates a school zone is proximate to a sign that (1) indicates that speed monitoring systems are in use in the school zone and (2) conforms with specified traffic control device standards adopted by the State Highway Administration. Similar requirements apply to speed cameras established on Maryland Route 210 (Indian Head Highway), grounds of institutions of higher education in Prince George's County, Interstate 83 in Baltimore City, Maryland Route 175 in Anne Arundel County (Jessup Road) between the Maryland Route 175/295 interchange and the Anne Arundel County-Howard County line, and at the intersection of Maryland Route 333 (Oxford Road) and Bonfield Avenue in Talbot County.

An authorizing ordinance or resolution adopted by the governing body of a local jurisdiction must establish certain procedures related to the movement or placement of speed monitoring systems. Specifically, if a jurisdiction moves (or places) a mobile (or stationary) speed monitoring system to (or at) a new location, the jurisdiction may not issue a citation for a violation recorded by that speed monitoring system (1) until signage is installed, as specified, and (2) for at least the first 15 calendar days after the signage is installed.

Chapter 628 authorizes the placement of up to two speed cameras on Interstate 83 in Baltimore City; however, that authorization terminates June 30, 2026. Chapter 628 also requires each sign indicating that a speed monitoring system is in use be proximate to a device that displays a real-time posting of the speed at which a driver is traveling. Additionally, for any speed camera established on Interstate 83 in Baltimore City, an agency must mail a warning notice instead of a citation for a violation recorded by the system during the first 90 days of its operation.

Speed Monitoring Systems – Citations and Fines

Unless the driver of the motor vehicle received a citation from a police officer at the time of the violation, the owner or the driver of a motor vehicle is subject to a civil penalty if the motor vehicle is recorded by a speed monitoring system while exceeding the posted speed limit. The authorized agency (*e.g.*, a local law enforcement agency) must mail a citation to the owner that includes specified information, including a copy of the recorded image, the location where the violation occurred, and the amount of the civil penalty imposed and the date by which the civil penalty should be paid. A person who receives a citation may:

- pay the civil penalty, in accordance with the instructions on the citation, directly to the political subdivision; or
- elect to stand trial in the District Court for the alleged violation.

The civil penalty may not exceed \$40, and the District Court must prescribe:

- a uniform citation form that includes specified information and allows the person receiving the citation to pay the citation or contest the citation by standing trial, as specified; and
- a civil penalty, which must be indicated on the citation, to be paid by persons who choose to prepay the civil penalty without appearing in District Court.

With specified exceptions, penalty revenues from automated enforcement systems, including speed monitoring systems, must be paid (1) to the relevant political subdivision, in an uncontested case and (2) directly to the District Court (and consequently the general fund) in a case that is contested in District Court.

Generally, from the fines generated by a speed monitoring system, the relevant jurisdiction may recover the costs of implementing the system and may spend any remaining balance solely for public safety purposes, including for pedestrian safety programs. However, if the balance of revenues after cost recovery for any fiscal year is greater than 10% of the jurisdiction's total revenues, the excess must be remitted to the Comptroller. Chapter 628 requires that any remaining balance after cost-recovery be distributed to the Baltimore City Department of Transportation to assist in covering the costs of roadway improvements on Interstate 83 in Baltimore City.

State Fiscal Effect: Under the bill, the number of citations issued in Baltimore City is expected to increase, beginning as soon as fiscal 2026, assuming at least one additional speed camera is placed on Interstate 83. Moreover, the bill repeals the termination date of Chapter 628, making permanent the existing speed cameras on the highways and any new

cameras that may be placed pursuant to the bill's authority. Absent the bill, beginning in fiscal 2027, any cameras on the highway would be required to cease operations.

As a result of these changes, the number of individuals opting for a trial in District Court is also likely to increase. Accordingly, general fund revenues increase, as fine revenues paid by individuals convicted in District Court are paid into the general fund. As discussed in more detail below, a significant portion of Baltimore City's speed camera citations and the associated revenues are from just the two existing speed cameras on Interstate 83. The increase in District Court caseloads can likely be handled with existing resources.

Local Fiscal Effect: Baltimore City revenues may increase significantly in fiscal 2026 assuming at least one additional camera is installed pursuant to the bill's authorization to place two additional cameras on Interstate 83. (Although the bill takes effect in fiscal 2025, no impact on revenues is expected until fiscal 2026 due to the requirement for only warning notices be issued for the first 90 days of operation.) As Baltimore City did not respond to multiple requests for information on the bill, the timing for use of the additional authorization is not known.

Baltimore City expenditures also increase to procure, install, and maintain the additional cameras, and to procure and place signage displaying a driver's real-time traveling speed, to the extent any existing signage is not redeployed for this purpose. If Baltimore City uses the authorization to install two additional speed cameras immediately, these costs could be borne in fiscal 2025. Additionally, expenditures continue in future fiscal years for costs associated with maintaining and operating the systems.

Absent the bill, the authorization to place any speed cameras on Interstate 83 in Baltimore City terminates beginning in fiscal 2027. Because the bill authorizes the program to continue in perpetuity, Baltimore City revenues and expenditures continue to increase significantly beginning fiscal 2027 as the speed camera program continues its operations.

For informational purposes only, according to the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission's [annual report](#) on speed monitoring systems in use in the State, in fiscal 2023 there were 169 speed cameras in operation in Baltimore City and those cameras issued 862,359 citations. According to the report, revenues from these cameras totaled \$14.9 million in fiscal 2023 (averaging approximately \$88,000 per camera) and administrative expenditures for the program in that year totaled \$7.2 million (averaging approximately \$42,650 per camera). Additionally, for fiscal 2023, 38.2% of all speed camera citations issued in Baltimore City were issued from the two existing speed cameras on Interstate 83.

The Comptroller's Office advises that, for fiscal 2024, the two speed cameras on Interstate 83 accounted for 27.9% of all speed camera citations issued for Baltimore City

and generated \$5.6 million. As such, doubling the number of speed cameras on the highway could increase Baltimore City revenues (and corresponding administrative and roadway improvement expenditures) by millions of dollars annually.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: HB 913 (Delegate Wells)(By Request - Baltimore City Administration) - Environment and Transportation.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Comptroller's Office; Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

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