

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 520

(Senator Charles)

Judicial Proceedings

Motor Vehicles - Speed Monitoring Systems - Safety Corridors

This bill authorizes the State Highway Administration (SHA) to place and use speed monitoring systems (*i.e.*, speed cameras) on segments of highway identified as “safety corridors.” The bill establishes various requirements related to the use of these speed cameras that are substantially similar to existing requirements applicable to other speed cameras used in the State. The Comptroller must distribute revenue from civil fines collected through the use of safety corridor speed cameras to a special fund. Money in the fund must first be distributed to SHA to cover the costs of implementing and administering safety corridor speed cameras. After this distribution, the remaining balance must be distributed to the Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) for highway safety purposes and SHA system preservation. SHA may adopt regulations establishing standards and procedures for safety corridor speed monitoring systems.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Special fund revenues and expenditures increase, likely by hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars annually, beginning in fiscal 2026 as revenues from safety corridor speed cameras are collected by the Comptroller and disbursed to SHA. TTF revenues and expenditures increase correspondingly as the revenues are received and used to pay for SHA’s program costs and for highway safety purposes and system preservation. General fund expenditures increase by \$14,000 in FY 2026 only for programming costs for the Judiciary.

Local Effect: The bill does not directly affect local government operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: Potential minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary: “Safety corridor” means a segment of a State highway that is identified by SHA as (1) an area of high risk to vulnerable road users in a vulnerable road user safety assessment prepared pursuant to federal law or (2) a priority corridor in SHA’s Pedestrian Safety Action Plan. “Vulnerable road user” means an individual on a highway who is not traveling in a motor vehicle and explicitly includes pedestrians, bicyclists, other cyclists, persons using personal conveyance or a mobility device, and persons on foot in a highway work zone.

A speed monitoring system may be used by SHA or its contractor to record the images of motor vehicles traveling on a State highway within a safety corridor; however, a system may only be used if, in accordance with the Maryland Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, a conspicuous road sign is placed at a reasonable distance before the corridor alerting drivers that the system may be in operation. A system may only be used to record the images of vehicles traveling 12 miles per hour or more above the posted speed limit. A civil penalty for a speed violation recorded by a safety corridor speed camera may not exceed \$40.

The bill establishes additional requirements regarding the use of speed cameras on safety corridors, which are substantially similar to the requirements applicable to the use of other speed cameras in the State, including requirements related to:

- the inspection of recorded images captured by the speed cameras;
- ongoing independent calibration testing for the speed cameras;
- a prohibition on issuing citations from a camera until the required signage is installed and for at least the first 15 calendar days after the signage is installed;
- the issuance of warning notices and citations and payment of civil penalties associated with violations recorded by the cameras;
- liability for a violation between a vehicle owner and a driver of the vehicle, who in some cases may not be the owner;
- the exclusive jurisdiction of the District Court to hear contested cases regarding speed camera citations;
- court proceedings, evidentiary rules, and information that the District Court may consider in defense of an alleged violation; and
- the payment of contractor fees.

The bill also amends § 26-305(a) of the Transportation Article – which states that the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) *must* refuse to register or transfer the registration of a vehicle cited for a speed violation recorded by speed cameras if notified that the civil penalty is not paid and the violation is not contested – to include safety corridor speed

cameras established by the bill. Other provisions in the bill *authorize* MVA to *suspend* the registration of a vehicle under this circumstance (or refuse to register or reregister the vehicle) if the citation is from a safety corridor speed camera.

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 SHA. 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.

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.

State Traffic Safety Programs

The State's traffic safety program was renamed to be Vision Zero by Chapter 377 of 2019 but is currently referred to as [Zero Deaths Maryland](#). The program is administered by the Maryland Highway Safety Office (MHSO) and housed within MVA. SHA partners closely with MHSO to implement traffic and highway safety programs, policies, and best practices. MHSO's [Strategic Highway Safety Plan](#) includes a list of and information about high priority safety corridors in the State.

In support of Vision Zero and Zero Deaths Maryland, Chapters 153 and 154 of 2022 require SHA to perform an infrastructure review of each pedestrian or bicyclist fatality that occurs on a State highway or at an intersection of a State highway and another highway or municipal street. Additionally, Chapter 603 of 2024 (1) substantially expanded the responsibilities of the Vision Zero coordinator (the individual in charge of overseeing the implementation of Vision Zero throughout the State), with respect to the implementation of the State's Vision Zero program and (2) requires the coordinator to hold quarterly public meetings on the implementation of Vision Zero.

State Fiscal Effect:

State Highway Administration

SHA advises that it plans to implement the safety corridor speed camera program authorized by the bill with a net zero fiscal impact. SHA anticipates that revenues collected in any given year will fully offset its administrative costs for the program and the remaining revenues will be used for highway safety purposes and system preservation, as required by the bill. A precise fiscal impact for the program cannot be reliably estimated without actual experience under the bill because it depends on numerous unknown and yet to be determined factors, including the number and placement of safety corridor speed cameras.

Nevertheless, SHA's experience managing the State's Work Zone Safety Program is instructive to get a sense of the likely structure of the program and magnitude of the impact. SHA advises that, in fiscal 2024, the Work Zone Safety Program issued 367,388 citations, collected \$12.8 million in penalty revenues, and had administrative expenses totaling \$6.7 million; SHA's total costs for the program constituted about 52.4% of its gross revenue.

SHA anticipates a similar ratio of costs to revenues for the safety corridor speed camera program established under the bill. SHA estimates that for every \$780,000 it spends on the program, approximately 50,000 new speed camera citations are issued, with associated revenues of \$1.5 million. Under this illustrative example, \$720,000 would remain for SHA to use for highway safety purposes and system preservation. Thus, TTF revenues and expenditures are anticipated to increase by hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars annually as SHA implements the safety corridor speed camera program.

The Maryland Department of Transportation also notes that when MVA places an administrative flag on a vehicle's record related to unpaid citations, there is an associated fee to remove the flag. Thus, as additional citations are issued under the bill, TTF revenues may increase to the extent additional flags are placed and subsequently removed upon payment of the fee. Any impact, however, is anticipated to be minimal.

Comptroller's Office

It is assumed that the Comptroller's Office can collect, account for, and disburse safety corridor speed camera revenues using existing budgeted resources. Since the bill requires the Comptroller's Office to act only as a pass-through entity for the revenues, there is no net impact on the Comptroller's finances.

District Court

General fund expenditures for the District Court increase for programming changes necessary to modify its penalty fee schedule on citation forms. Programming-related costs total an estimated \$14,080 in fiscal 2026.

The increased issuance of speed camera citations is expected to result in additional cases before the District Court as some individuals receiving citations attempt to contest the case to avoid paying the penalty. It is anticipated, however, that the Judiciary can handle any increased case volume using existing budgeted resources.

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: HB 348 (Delegate Stewart) - Environment and Transportation.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Transportation; Comptroller's Office; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of State Police; Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties; Maryland Municipal League; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 3, 2025
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