

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 485 (Senator Muse)
Judicial Proceedings

Prince George's County - Speed Monitoring Systems - Maryland Route 210

This bill increases civil penalties for speed monitoring system (*i.e.*, speed camera) violations on Maryland Route 210 in Prince George’s County. The bill also makes permanent the authority for speed cameras to be placed on Maryland Route 210 in Prince George’s County by repealing the September 30, 2028 termination date for the program.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) revenues and expenditures increase, potentially by several hundred thousand dollars annually, beginning in FY 2026 due to an existing revenue-sharing requirement related to speed camera violations on Maryland Route 210. General fund revenues increase to the extent more violations are contested under the bill, as discussed below. Because the bill makes the authorization for speed cameras on Maryland Route 210 permanent, expenditures and revenues associated with these speed cameras continue beyond FY 2029 (when the authorization would otherwise terminate). General fund expenditures increase by \$21,000 in FY 2026 only for programming costs for the Judiciary.

Local Effect: The bill does not materially affect Prince George’s County finances or operations until FY 2029, when the authorization would otherwise terminate under current law. At that time, Prince George’s County expenditures and revenues increase, as discussed below.

Small Business Effect: Potential minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary/Current Law: Under current law, the civil penalty for a citation issued through a speed monitoring system is capped at \$40 and is payable to the political subdivision operating the speed monitoring system; otherwise, the citation may be contested in District Court. The District Court must prescribe a uniform citation form, 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.

Chapter 806 of 2018 authorized Prince George’s County, for five years, to place one speed camera at the intersection of Old Fort Road and Maryland Route 210, subject to specified requirements. Chapter 586 of 2019 repealed the limitation on the specific location of that speed camera and increased, to three, the number of speed cameras that could be placed on Maryland Route 210 in the county until the initial authorization terminated (originally September 30, 2023). Chapter 606 of 2023 again increased the number of speed cameras that may be placed on Maryland Route 210 (from three to six) and extended the termination date of the original authorization by five years (through September 30, 2028). The bill repeals the termination date of the original authorization, as extended by Chapter 606, thereby making the authority to place speed cameras on Maryland Route 210 permanent.

Exhibit 1 shows the tiered, flat civil penalty levels required to be assessed for citations issued through a speed monitoring system on Maryland Route 210 under the bill.

Exhibit 1 Penalties for Speed Camera Violations Under Current Law and the Bill Maryland Route 210

<u>Exceeding Posted Speed Limit by:</u>	<u>Current Civil Penalty</u>	<u>Civil Penalty Under the Bill</u>
12 to 15 miles per hour		\$60
16 to 19 miles per hour		80
20 to 29 miles per hour	Capped at \$40	140
30 to 39 miles per hour		270
40+ miles per hour		500

Note: The civil penalties established under the bill are not maximums.

Source: Department of Legislative Services

Also, pursuant to Chapter 147 of 2020, fines collected by Prince George’s County as a result of violations enforced by speed cameras on Maryland Route 210 must be remitted to the State Highway Administration (SHA) for specified activities after cost recovery. (This requirement replaced a provision of Chapter 806 that required the fine revenues to be deposited into the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund.) SHA must solely use the fine revenues to assist in covering the costs of (1) examining the engineering, infrastructure, and other relevant factors that may contribute to safety issues on Maryland Route 210; (2) reporting its findings and recommendations on any solutions to these safety issues; and (3) implementing any solutions to these safety issues.

State Revenues: As noted above, the current authorization to use speed cameras on Maryland Route 210 terminates September 30, 2028. Due to the bill’s repeal of the termination date, revenues associated with these speed cameras are maintained beyond the first quarter of fiscal 2029, when the authorization would otherwise terminate.

However, the bill *also* significantly increases the penalties for speed violations recorded by a speed camera on Maryland Route 210 beginning in fiscal 2026, as discussed below.

District Court and General Fund

Under the bill, a person issued a violation that is captured by a speed camera on Maryland Route 210 is potentially subject to a significantly higher civil penalty than under current law, depending on the level at which the person exceeds the speed limit.

Additionally, because of the increased fine levels established by the bill, more individuals issued speed camera citations for violations captured on Maryland Route 210 are expected to request a trial in District Court. If an individual is found guilty after a trial, the penalty is paid to the general fund, rather than the local government issuing the citation. However, the exact impact on general fund revenues depends on the number of guilty dispositions in court, which cannot be reliably determined at this time, and can only be determined with actual experience under the bill.

Additional factors may also affect overall citation volume (such as changes in driving behavior as drivers become aware of the new penalties for speeding under the bill). Despite these factors, because the fine amounts are considerably higher than those under current law, general fund revenues are expected to increase – even assuming a relatively low conviction rate.

Transportation Trust Fund

As noted above, Prince George’s County is required to transfer net fine revenues (*i.e.*, revenues remaining after cost recovery) from speed camera violations on

Maryland Route 210 to the Comptroller for distribution to SHA. Thus, under the bill, TTF revenues increase commensurately for the required activities.

Prince George's County has previously advised that, for fiscal 2023, approximately 13,743 citations were issued by speed cameras on Maryland Route 210 and subsequently satisfied with the county; after cost recovery, \$334,456 was remitted to the Comptroller for distribution to SHA. This figure excludes any citations issued that were contested in District Court, voided for technical reasons, or otherwise not paid. Although Prince George's County also advises that 80% of its speed camera violations are for lower threshold violations (*i.e.*, 12 to 19 miles per hour over the speed limit), each of these violations is subject to a penalty that is at least \$20 more than the maximum penalty under current law.

Accordingly, citation revenues remitted to SHA may increase by as much as several hundred thousand dollars annually under the bill; however, the higher penalty levels are also likely to have a deterrent effect, which may offset the higher revenues over time as driver behavior changes.

State Expenditures:

District Court

General fund expenditures for the District Court increase for programming changes necessary to modify its penalty fee schedule to meet the bill's requirements. Programming-related costs total an estimated \$21,048 in fiscal 2026.

As noted above, the increased penalties established by the bill likely result in additional cases before the District Court as individuals receiving citations contest the case to avoid paying the higher penalties. It is anticipated that the Judiciary can handle any increased (and ongoing) case volume using existing budgeted resources; however, the bill may have a more significant operational impact on the District Court locations in Prince George's County, depending on the portion of individuals cited who choose to request a trial.

State Highway Administration

To the extent SHA receives more revenues than it currently does under the existing revenue-sharing requirement noted above, TTF expenditures increase commensurately for the required activities (*e.g.*, implementing solutions to safety issues on Maryland Route 210). As noted above, in fiscal 2023, \$334,456 was remitted to the Comptroller for distribution to SHA.

Additionally, SHA expenditures are maintained beyond fiscal 2029 due to the bill's repeal of the termination date for the program.

Local Fiscal Effect: The bill does not materially affect Prince George's County operations or finances until fiscal 2029, when the program for speed cameras on Maryland Route 210 would otherwise terminate absent the bill, due to the requirement to remit speed camera revenues from Maryland Route 210 to SHA (after cost recovery). Beginning in fiscal 2029, Prince George's County expenditures and revenues increase correspondingly as administrative expenses and cost-recovery revenues associated with the program continue in perpetuity.

Additionally, Prince George's County may benefit from increased (and ongoing) spending by SHA on safety improvements for Maryland Route 210.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 974 of 2024 and HB 431 of 2023.

Designated Cross File: HB 349 (Prince George's County Delegation) - Environment and Transportation.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Maryland Department of Transportation; Comptroller's Office; Prince George's County; Department of Legislative Services

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