

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 173

(Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee)(By Request -
Departmental - Transportation)

Judicial Proceedings

**Vehicle Laws - Automated Enforcement - Reciprocal Agreements,
Arrangements, and Declarations**

This departmental bill authorizes the Motor Vehicle Administrator to make an agreement, arrangement, or declaration with the authorized representative of any other jurisdiction to allow reciprocal enforcement of violations recorded by traffic control signal monitoring systems (*i.e.*, red light cameras) and speed monitoring systems (*i.e.*, speed cameras) between the State and the other jurisdiction. Any such agreement, arrangement, or declaration may authorize the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) to refuse to register or reregister a motor vehicle. The bill also alters the State policy regarding the promotion and encouragement of reciprocal enforcement efforts by specifying that such cooperation also contributes to the safety of the State.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund, Transportation Trust Fund (TTF), and nonbudgeted revenues increase, potentially beginning as early as FY 2027, to the extent that the bill results in unpaid automated enforcement citations being paid, as discussed below. MVA can implement the bill using existing budgeted resources. Any additional caseload for the District Court can be handled using existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: Local revenues and expenditures increase, potentially beginning as early as FY 2027, to the extent that the bill results in unpaid automated enforcement citations being paid, as discussed below.

Small Business Effect: The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) has determined that this bill has minimal or no impact on small business (attached). The Department of Legislative Services concurs with this assessment.

Analysis

Current Law:

Automated Enforcement 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, work zone speed control systems, and noise abatement monitoring systems. Statute prescribes various requirements for each of the different types of systems related to, among other things, which local jurisdictions and State entities are authorized to deploy the systems, the number of systems that are authorized to be used within a particular location, the notification process that a local jurisdiction or State agency must follow before placing a system, and the process by which citations are issued for recorded violations.

Red Light Cameras and Speed Cameras – Citations and Penalties

The maximum fine for a violation captured by a traffic control signal monitoring system (red light camera) is \$100, while the maximum fine for a violation captured by a speed monitoring system (speed camera) ranges from \$40 to \$425, depending on the excessiveness of the speed violation. Generally, a person who receives a citation may:

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

With specified exceptions, penalty revenues from automated enforcement systems must be paid (1) to the administering State agency or local jurisdiction, 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.

Please see the **Appendix – Speed Monitoring Systems** for additional information about speed cameras.

Reciprocal Agreements

It is the policy of the State to promote and encourage the fullest possible use of its highway system by authorizing vehicle reciprocal or proportional registration agreements, arrangements, and declarations with other jurisdictions as to vehicles registered in this State and in those other jurisdictions, thus contributing to the economic and social development and growth of this State. To that end, the Motor Vehicle Administrator is authorized to make reciprocal agreements, arrangements, and declarations; however, State law specifies

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the types of benefits, privileges, and exemptions for which those agreements, arrangements, and declarations may apply.

State law does not explicitly authorize the Motor Vehicle Administrator to participate in reciprocal enforcement activities related to any automated enforcement systems.

Background: MDOT advises that the bill is needed to allow MVA to enter into reciprocal agreements with other states to mutually enforce unpaid automated enforcement citations. Specifically, the bill is anticipated to help address repeat offenders who regularly speed and run red lights through multiple jurisdictions. MDOT advises that the bill furthers the goals set out by the State's [Vision Zero](#) program by allowing Maryland to work regionally to increase enforcement against the most dangerous drivers.

In 2024, the District of Columbia passed the [STEER Act](#), which, among other things, allows the district's Attorney General to pursue civil penalties against out-of-district drivers with outstanding citations. MDOT advises that some Maryland drivers have already been targeted by the district for unpaid automated enforcement system citation penalties.

State/Local Revenues: The reciprocal agreements made possible by the bill are likely to result in additional automated enforcement system citations being paid beginning as early as fiscal 2027. Because various automated enforcement systems are administered by the State Highway Administration, the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA), and local jurisdictions, and because contested cases are adjudicated through the District Court, revenues from these citations may accrue to TTF, MDTA's nonbudgeted fund, directly to the local jurisdictions, and/or the general fund as they are collected.

However, the amount of citation revenues that may be received cannot be determined without actual experience under the bill. MVA advises that it has no information on the amount of outstanding citation revenues owed to the State from out-of-state vehicles, nor the number of Maryland vehicles that owe fines to other states. Additionally, as the use of reciprocal agreements for automated enforcement systems between states and jurisdictions is a relatively new concept (with the STEER Act discussed above being one of the first), there is little information available from other jurisdictions to estimate the collection rate that MVA may experience under the bill.

TTF revenues also increase, likely minimally, to the extent that administrative flag fees are paid for State-registered vehicles that have their registrations suspended after MVA receives notifications from other jurisdictions. Specifically, MVA charges a \$30 administrative fee in order for an owner to reregister the vehicle after a registration is suspended.

Local Expenditures: Local jurisdictions must typically use any revenues they receive from speed camera programs for specified purposes (generally related to public safety). Thus, local expenditures increase to the extent that the bill results in the collection of unpaid speed camera citations as those revenues are used for required purposes.

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: HB 249 (Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee)(By Request - Departmental - Transportation) - Environment and Transportation.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Transportation; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 19, 2026
gj/jkb

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ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC IMPACT ON SMALL BUSINESSES

TITLE OF BILL: Vehicle Laws - Automated Enforcement - Reciprocal Agreements, Arrangements, and Declarations

BILL NUMBER: SB 173

PREPARED BY: DREW MORRISON

PART A. ECONOMIC IMPACT RATING

This agency estimates that the proposed bill:

X WILL HAVE MINIMAL OR NO ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND
SMALL
BUSINESS

OR

 WILL HAVE MEANINGFUL ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND
SMALL
BUSINESSES

PART B. ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

This legislation permits the Motor Vehicle Administration to implement into agreements concerning automated enforcement citation reciprocity. No small business interests are at issue in this legislation.

Appendix – Speed Monitoring Systems

Speed Monitoring Systems – Authorization and Administrative Requirements

Speed monitoring systems are authorized to be used by the State Highway Administration (SHA), the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA), and local jurisdictions in specified locations as prescribed by State law. Most commonly, the systems are authorized for use in school zones; however, the systems may also be used on other specified highways and roadways, including Maryland Route 210 in Prince George’s County, Interstate 83 in Baltimore City and Baltimore County, and Maryland Route 200 in Montgomery County.

A speed monitoring system may not be used by a local jurisdiction unless its use is authorized by the governing body of the jurisdiction after reasonable notice and a public hearing. Before activating a speed monitoring system, SHA, MDTA, or a local jurisdiction, as applicable, must publish notice of the location of the system on its website and in a newspaper of general circulation in the jurisdiction. Statute prescribes additional requirements applicable to monitoring systems in certain locations. For example, speed monitoring systems in school zones may only operate Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. through 8:00 p.m.

In addition, statute includes numerous specifications that, subject to limited exception, broadly apply to the use of speed cameras in the State, including those related to:

- the placement of new speed monitoring systems (and movement of existing systems), including the timeframe during which such systems may only be used to issue warnings instead of citations;
- the placement and location of speed limit signs approaching and within an area covered by a speed monitoring system;
- the designation of an official or employee to investigate and respond to questions or concerns about the speed camera program;
- required training for speed monitoring system operators;
- required annual calibration checks for each speed monitoring system;
- guidelines for if an agency or local jurisdiction hires a contractor to operate a speed camera program;
- procedures for the use of recordings captured by a speed monitoring system as evidence; and
- data collection and reporting.

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 with 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 (*e.g.*, directly to the political subdivision for most locally administered programs); or
- elect to stand trial in the District Court for the alleged violation.

Chapter 505 of 2025 established an escalating penalty structure that generally applies for alleged violations recorded by speed monitoring systems in the State, as shown below in **Exhibit 1**.

Exhibit 1
Penalty Structure for Violations Recorded by Speed Monitoring Systems
Effective October 1, 2025

<u>Exceeding the Speed Limit by:</u>	<u>Maximum Penalty</u>
12 - 15 MPH, inclusive	\$40
16 - 19 MPH, inclusive	70
20 - 29 MPH, inclusive	120
30 - 39 MPH, inclusive	230
40 or more MPH	425

MPH: miles per hour

Source: Department of Legislative Services
