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FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 487

(Senator Henson)

Judicial Proceedings

**Motor Vehicles - Speed Monitoring Systems - Safety Corridors (Vulnerable Road
User Protection Act of 2026)**

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.” SHA may also authorize a local government to place and use such systems. 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. SHA may adopt regulations establishing standards and procedures for safety corridor speed monitoring systems.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Special fund revenues and expenditures increase, potentially by millions of dollars annually (possibly beginning as early as FY 2027), as revenues from safety corridor speed cameras are collected by the Comptroller and disbursed to SHA. Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) revenues and expenditures increase correspondingly as the revenues are received and used for authorized purposes. General fund expenditures for the Judiciary are not anticipated to be materially affected, as discussed below. General fund revenues from contested cases in the District Court may increase beginning in FY 2027, as discussed below.

Local Effect: Local government revenues and expenditures increase to the extent that SHA authorizes a local government to implement a safety corridor speed camera program, as discussed below.

Small Business Effect: Potential minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary: “Safety corridor” means a segment of a State highway that is identified by SHA as an area of high risk to vulnerable road users in a vulnerable road user safety assessment prepared pursuant to federal law. “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 a 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. Additionally, SHA may issue a permit that authorizes a local jurisdiction to place and use a speed monitoring system on a State highway in a safety corridor within its jurisdiction, under specified circumstances. Existing provisions of law governing locally operated speed monitoring systems apply to locally operated safety corridor speed monitoring systems, whereas the bill establishes new provisions that govern safety corridor speed monitoring systems used by SHA.

The Comptroller must distribute revenue from civil fines collected through the use of safety corridor speed cameras by SHA 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 and, after this distribution, the remaining balance must be distributed to TTF for highway safety purposes and SHA system preservation. This additional funding is supplemental to and is not intended to take the place of funding that would otherwise be appropriated to SHA for these purposes.

The other new requirements established by the bill for SHA’s safety corridor speed monitoring systems are substantially similar to the requirements applicable to the use of other speed cameras in the State, including provisions related to:

- the escalating penalty structure for a violation recorded by a speed monitoring system (which ranges from \$40 to \$425 depending on the excessiveness of the speed violation);
- enforcement actions related to vehicle registration that may be taken by the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA), when a violator fails to pay the civil penalty or request a trial;
- 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.

Current Law: 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. Generally, pursuant to § 21-809(d)(5) of the Transportation Article, 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, including speed monitoring 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.

For additional information, please see the **Appendix – Speed Monitoring Systems**.

State Fiscal Effect:

State Highway Administration

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 how many cameras are ultimately placed and, subsequently, how many citations are issued and penalties are paid. Moreover, driver behavior may change over time reducing the amount of citations. SHA also advises that it does not intend to install speed cameras on a safety corridor if a local jurisdiction expresses interest in installing speed cameras in the same location.

For illustrative purposes only, a preliminary analysis prepared by MDOT estimates that citation revenues could total as much as \$26.8 million based on the following scenario: (1) 75 speed cameras are placed in subject corridors; (2) citations are issued to 0.05% of vehicular traffic along the corridors; and (3) the average fine is \$50.

MDOT 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

As additional speed cameras are installed and used in the State and additional speed camera citations are subsequently issued, the number of individuals opting for a trial in District Court is also likely to increase. Accordingly, general fund revenues increase, likely minimally, as fine revenues paid by individuals convicted in District Court are paid into the general fund. For context, the Judiciary advises that there were 6,479 requests for trial based on citations issued from speed monitoring systems in fiscal 2025.

It is anticipated that any additional workload resulting from the bill's requirements does not materially affect general fund expenditures for the District Court.

The Judiciary advises that the significant expansion of automated enforcement systems in the State in recent years necessitates an upgrade to its case management system to improve citation intake and payment processing. For locally operated automated enforcement systems, the District Court administers citations and the payment of fines from contested citations only. For automated enforcement systems operated by a State agency, the District Court administers citations and the payment of fines for both contested and uncontested citations. The court currently processes these citations through a manual workflow that has struggled to keep pace with the expansion of automated enforcement systems. The Judiciary estimates the cost of an information technology upgrade to automate the process at approximately \$1.4 million; additional staffing costs may also be incurred.

However, because the Judiciary's need is not exclusively attributable to the bill, but rather due to the general expansion of automated enforcement systems, these costs are not reflected in this analysis.

Local Fiscal Effect: The bill authorizes SHA to authorize local governments to establish safety corridor speed cameras on State highway in their respective jurisdictions. To the extent that any local jurisdiction implements a safety corridor speed camera program:

- expenditures increase to install the speed cameras and required signs and for other administrative expenses that may be incurred for the operation of the speed camera program (*e.g.*, mailing or contractual costs);
- revenues increase as citations are issued and penalty revenues are paid to the local jurisdiction; and
- expenditures further increase as the penalty revenues are used for authorized purposes.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See SB 520 and HB 348 of 2025.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Transportation; Comptroller's Office; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of State Police; Baltimore City; Baltimore, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George's County; Maryland Association of Counties; Department of Legislative Services

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caw/jkb

Analysis by: Richard L. Duncan

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510

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
