



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith Jr. Chairman and
Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Chief David Morris, Co-Chair, MCPA, Joint Legislative Committee
Sheriff Darren Popkin, Co-Chair, MSA, Joint Legislative Committee
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: March 4, 2020

RE: **SB 878 Worcester County - Special Event Zones - Prohibitions**

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) SUPPORT SB 878. This bill is intended to address public safety situations that occur in Ocean City during automotive or motor vehicle events where the public gathers in large numbers and in close proximity to a highway. Ocean City hosts numerous events throughout the year. However, one unsanctioned event in particular tends to draw crowds that sit along Coastal Highway to cheer on drivers in certain types of vehicles. This leads to excessive speed, spinning of wheels, speed contests, and negligent and reckless driving on the part of individuals. It has become increasingly difficult for law enforcement, even with assistance from other agencies, to effectively address the number of violations that occur. SB 878 is proposing to mitigate these occurrences through increased penalties and fines in the designated "special event zones."

Specifically, the bill defines exhibition driving and authorizes the State Highway Administration and a local authority to designate a "special event zone" on roadways and reduce speeds. A person found to be in violation of exceeding the reduced speed limit, negligent driving, participating in a race or speed contest, spinning wheels or causing excessive noise would be subject to imprisonment or a fine not exceeding \$1,000 or both.

SB 878 proposes a reasonable solution to address the egregious behavior that occurs during this event. For these reasons, MCPA and MSA SUPPORT SB 878 and urge a FAVORABLE Committee Report.