



House Bill 475

Speed Monitoring Systems in School Zones – Operation Times – Limitation

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Environment and Transportation Committee

Date: February 4, 2021

From: Michael Sanderson

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 475. The bill would impose unreasonable and unnecessary requirements on school zone speed camera programs.

HB 475 would limit the use of a school zone speed camera from year-round to only during the regular school year. This Committee has considered and rejected limiting the hours and dates of operation in previous sessions. The current Monday through Friday, 6:00 am to 8:00 pm operational time is consistent and easy to understand. The current rule incorporates the primary times when most school and after-school activities occur. Additionally, some public schools host extensive summer programs, whose students benefit from the safety the current law and speed camera programs provide.

HB 475's language would create a confusing patchwork, as different jurisdictions' schools operate on different schedules and it cannot be assumed that all drivers are familiar with any particular school system's schedule. Speed camera programs are ultimately about making the roadways safer, which is still a need outside of the school year, especially for communities with a dense population of schoolchildren.

Current law provides for rational criteria as to where speed cameras can be located within a school zone: road segments where students are walking and bicycling to or from school or where they are being picked up or dropped off by school vehicles. However, this bill would narrowly and illogically restrict speed cameras to a half-mile radius of a school. This arbitrary requirement that the systems be so close to the school itself may not target the location where speeding poses the greatest risk to students and the surrounding communities, which is why the current law covers areas where the students may be traveling to and from the school.

HB 475 is unnecessary and would significantly undermine local school zone speed camera programs, thereby reducing the safety benefits these programs provide to students. Accordingly, MACo requests the Committee give HB 475 an **UNFAVORABLE** report.