

HB 562 - MoCo (Senate)(GA 21).pdf

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Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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HB 562

DATE: March 16, 2021

SPONSOR: Montgomery County Delegation

ASSIGNED TO: Judicial Proceedings

CONTACT PERSON: Sara Morningstar (Sara.Morningstar@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: SUPPORT

Montgomery County – Speed Limits – Establishment MC 02–21

House Bill 562 is enabling legislation to allow Montgomery County to decrease the maximum speed limit within its borders to not less than 15 mph on a highway only after performing an engineering and traffic investigation.

Montgomery County is committed to funding Vision Zero projects that prioritize steps necessary to eliminate serious and fatal crashes on its roadways. In a road safety study by the World Health Organization, a clear relationship was reported between vehicle speed and traffic deaths with the rate of pedestrian survivability linked to the speed at which a pedestrian was struck by a vehicle ([World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention](#)). A key element toward creating safer roadways is providing the County with greater flexibility to lower speed limits. A similar “slow streets” initiative was adopted by the District of Columbia in 2020.

Montgomery County supports HB 562 and would urge the Committee adopt a favorable report.

HB562 - MoCo-Speed Limits-Establishment - JPR - M

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Position: FAV



7338 Baltimore Ave
Suite 102
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Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Testimony on: HB562 - "Montgomery County - Speed Limits - Establishment - MC 02-21"

Position: Support

Hearing Date: March 18, 2021

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports HB562, which would authorize Montgomery County to decrease the maximum speed limit on its highways to not less than 15 miles per hour if engineering and traffic investigation justify such a decrease. Currently the lowest speed limit allowed on highways in the county is 25 miles per hour except in school zones during school hours.

We live in a car-centric culture where transportation planning, road infrastructure, and vehicle laws are largely focused on enabling vehicles to get to their destination as swiftly as possible. Unfortunately, this has resulted in some drivers feeling they have priority on the road, and there are high rates of injury and death for pedestrians and bicyclists as well as vehicle drivers and passengers. Research shows that a vehicle's rate of speed has a direct impact on the ability to see ahead and notice people in or near the roadway, how quickly one can respond to avoid potential problems, how long it takes to stop a vehicle, and how likely someone will die or be seriously injured as a result of a collision.

Transportation is now the primary contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in our state. Tailpipe emissions from cars and trucks are also a major source of health-damaging air pollution. For these reasons, there is an urgent need to get individuals out of their cars and taking public transit, riding bikes, and walking more. However, these activities are not as safe as they should be when vehicles are traveling too fast in densely populated areas, in shopping districts, where roads are narrow or where there isn't a clear line of vision.

Lowering speed limits is a key component of "Vision Zero," a program Montgomery County and many other areas have adopted to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries for all road users. Other components of Vision Zero include having adequate sidewalks, bikeways, and crosswalks, allowing sufficient time to cross streets, narrowing lanes, and adding other traffic calming measures. However, even if most of the elements of Vision Zero just mentioned are implemented, it's doubtful that the program can succeed unless the speed limit can be lowered where appropriate, as this bill specifies.

In summary, this bill makes sense for Montgomery County, its residents, and our environment. It has been endorsed by the County Delegation and we urge the committee to issue a favorable report on it.

Brian Ditzler
Transportation Committee Chair
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Josh Tulkin
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Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 75,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.

Takoma Park - HB 562 FWA - Speed Limits - Establis

Uploaded by: Ludlow, Suzanne

Position: FWA



CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

HB 562

Support with Amendment

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 18, 2021

HB 562: Montgomery County – Speed Limits - Establishment

City contact: Kate Stewart, Mayor

KateS@takomaparkmd.gov, 301-257-0098

The City of Takoma Park supports HB 562 with a recommendation for an amendment.

The safety of adults and children who are walking, biking, and using micromobility devices is of utmost importance to Takoma Park. This bill would enable Montgomery County to lower the speed limit to 15 miles per hour when needed. We support this and ask that the bill include an amendment to allow municipalities within the County to make these decisions as well.

Research shows that lower speed limits can prevent crashes and save lives, especially when crashes involve our most vulnerable roadway users -- people who are walking and biking. Lower speed limits are particularly important for young children and older adults.

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board recently adopted a Regional Roadway Safety Policy that recommends actions that would help jurisdictions to reduce fatalities and serious injuries, which remain unacceptably high in our region. Based on a regional roadway safety study, one of these recommendations is to reduce unsafe vehicle speeds.

For these reasons, we strongly support HB 562 with an amendment that would specify that Montgomery County and municipalities within Montgomery County be able to reduce the speed limit to 15 MPH. This would be an important step towards priorities the safety of our most vulnerable roadway users.

Thank you.