

March 10, 2022

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chairman, House Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

***Re: Letter of Information – HB 813 – Montgomery County – Speed and School Bus
Monitoring Systems MC 03-22***

Dear Chairman Barve and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 813 but offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

House Bill 813 would require the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), in conjunction with the MDOT State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA), to construct medians at locations on state highways with two or more traffic lanes in each direction where there have been more than 1,000 school bus monitoring camera citations issued within one year. House Bill 813 would require construction costs for the medians be shared equally between MCDOT and the MDOT SHA; should the revenue collected from fines be insufficient to cover MCDOT's share of the cost, the MDOT SHA would be required to pay the remaining total.

The construction of medians within the MDOT SHA right-of-way may not address pedestrian safety concerns; a raised median may act as a speed deterrent, but if it is not constructed in the appropriate location, the median could result in an increase of motor vehicle crashes. If a flush median is constructed on the roadway, it will likely lead to increased travel speeds. Therefore, the MDOT SHA does not typically consider raised medians in roadways with speed limits greater than 50 mph.

Current law specifies that motorists traveling in both directions on a multi-lane roadway are required to stop and remain stopped when a school bus is loading or unloading children. However, should a multi-lane roadway be divided by a median, motorists traveling on the side opposite of the school bus are not required to stop. Most importantly, this presents a significant safety concern for children attempting to cross the median, as vehicles that continue traveling opposite the school bus would not be violating the school bus monitoring system.

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Lastly, adding a median to an existing roadway would likely expand the footprint of the roadway, which could result in right-of-way, utility impacts, and overall costs of a project. The additional use of materials such as concrete and asphalt would require stormwater management, which could lead to additional right-of-way impacts. Additionally, House Bill 813 does not provide a funding source for elements of project development including planning, design, utility relocations, and right-of-way acquisition.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating House Bill 813.

Sincerely,

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