



HB811
**“Montgomery County – Speed
Monitoring Systems –
Maryland Route 200
3 (Intercounty Connector)
PLEASE SUPPORT**

MARYLAND COALITION FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY

SUPPORTS HB811

March 9, 2022

To:

Honorable Kumar Barve, Chair

Members of the Maryland House of Delegates Committee on Environment and Transportation

FROM:

John J. Seng, Director

Maryland Coalition For Highway Safety

JohnJSeng@gmail.com

(202) 468-7682

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/marylandcoalitionhighwaysafety>

My name is John Seng, volunteer director and founder of the *Maryland Coalition For Highway Safety*.

Our 175-member organization strongly supports the enactment of HB811, the “Montgomery County – Speed Monitoring Systems – Maryland Route 200 (Intercounty Connector).”

We request that the Environment and Transportation Committee submit a favorable review of this bill which as MC22-22, was subsequently amended and approved by the Montgomery County Delegation.

Our Background

Our founding organizations include the *American Automobile Association (AAA) Mid-Atlantic*, the *Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA)*, *The Route 210 Traffic Safety Committee* in Prince George’s County and a group of Maryland home owner associations. Alarmed by growing roadway violence in Maryland, we were established to call more attention to and combat the onslaught of speed and noise on our roads. The *Coalition* represents the interests of communities and individuals who directly suffer the consequences of illegal operation of motor vehicles.

The persistent toll that should concern us all? **More than 500 people die each year on Maryland roads.**

The Problem

As we've shared with you and members of the ENT Committee previously, we truly fear increasingly excessive, dangerous speeding; as well as reckless, aggressive and distracted driving on Maryland roadways.

Unfortunately, the Maryland 200 Intercounty Connector (ICC) is now a problem roadway. And it's worsening by each day.

The ICC opened fully in 2011, with a speed limit of 55mph. Two years later, the State increased the speed limit to 60mph, which increased road noise and reduced safety, doing so without polling communities abutting the highway.

Today, MDTA data indicate an average vehicle speed of 67mph on the ICC. Again, the limit is 60mph. From our anecdotal experience, extremely few vehicles drive the ICC at or below 60mph, but many speed well into the 70s, topped by crotch rocket motorcycles easily exceeding 100mph on non-increment weather days. With an assumed baseline of half of vehicles driving between 60-67mph, we estimate the other half speeds along between 68-74mph or higher on a highway initially designed for a 55mph limit!

From our first-hand experience, those who live within 1-2 miles on either side of the ICC hear speeding vehicles of all kinds all day and into the night. They also hear the sirens of first responders called to the scenes from our local fire and police departments, putting themselves at risk of death or severe injury from drivers who neglect to slow down and move to another lane.



MD 200 ICC, 5:00pm, Sunday, March 6, 2022, eastbound, pick-up truck collision, 180 degrees turnaround

With all due respect, we feel significant irony and frustration with the need to appeal to our elected officials in order to:

- Call attention to the current, well-documented danger of excessive speeding on this major Maryland road. Many Maryland lawmakers drive on this road and have no doubt experienced this "roadway violence" firsthand. You already know.
- Merely enforce a legally posted speed limit of 60mph that is well exceeded by most vehicles;
- Support a technology and system configured to cite only drivers who exceed the limit by 10 or 12mph;

- Reckon with a mere \$40 fine, which causes us to scratch our heads when one considers the significant value of deterrence to crashes and resulting deaths to innocent parties, including first responders.

We hope that elected officials agree that lawful speed limits exist for important reasons. We hope you agree that speed limit signs should be taken seriously, even if only enforced by an electronic slap on the wrist of \$40 for driving 75-120mph in a 60mph speed limit zone on the ICC.

Towards A Solution

The Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA), representing 130 residential communities in Montgomery County, overwhelmingly supported a resolution in favor of MC22-22 in its initial form. That documentation appears in an addendum to this letter.

When HB811/MC22-22 as amended hopefully becomes law, it will be the first action taken by any authority in 11 years to increase enforcement beyond MDTA Police maintaining its routine presence as well as conducting special enforcement periods that we welcome.

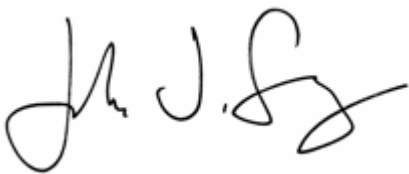
Maryland Lawmakers Can Create A Maryland Road Safety Legacy!

Is it possible that the Maryland General Assembly could yet still boldly take a preeminent, leadership role during this 2022 session by sending the message both in-State and to the rest of our nation that when we use Maryland roads, especially MD 200 Intercounty Connector, lawmakers put 100% into ensuring that safety comes first?

Taking Positive Steps

We thank you and the Committee for your review of our position, and urge you to submit a favorable recommendation and support for HB811.

Sincerely,



John J. Seng
Director

cc: *Coalition* membership

Addenda: *Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA)* letter and resolution

Hilary Phillips-Rogers
President
VICTORIA SPRINGS

Carol Frenkel
Executive Vice President
OLNEY MILL

Curtis Chappell
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OLNEY MILL

Ryan Martin
Corresponding Secretary
BROOKVILLE KNOLLS

Jeff Duce
Treasurer
NORBECK GROVE

Matt Quinn
Immediate Past President
CHERRYWOOD

January 14, 2022

Members,
Montgomery County Delegation
Maryland General Assembly
Annapolis, MD

RE: GOCA Support of MC22-22

Dear Honorable Members of the Montgomery County Delegation of the Maryland General Assembly,

The Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA) represents over thirty-five homeowner and civic associations, collectively comprising over 80% of the Olney Master Plan area households. For more than four decades, GOCA has promoted the civic, cultural, and economic welfare of the Olney community.

GOCA is significantly concerned about highway safety. The Intercounty Connector (ICC)/MD 200 is the only major highway passing through Olney. At least 30,000 vehicles per day drive through Olney on the ICC, including many from outside Maryland.

Maryland Department of Transportation (MDTA) data recently shared with us indicates an ICC vehicle average speed of 67mph despite the 60mph speed limit. This average speed is far too fast, clearly unlawful, dangerous, and creates excessive road-noise, affecting the safety and quality of life for Olney and other Montgomery County residents. MDTA Police are understaffed, underfunded, and therefore cannot address the current speeding problems. Increasingly, we hear and read news of fatalities, injuries, and crashes on the ICC, unfortunately, reflective of Statewide and national trending.

We appreciate the Montgomery County Delegation's introduction of MC22-22, which calls for installing speed cameras along the ICC between exits in Montgomery County. Speed cameras are long since proven technologies to reduce unlawful speeding.

As such, GOCA membership voted overwhelmingly this week to fully endorse and support MC22-22 via our approval of the attached resolution.

The homeowners of Olney, Maryland, will appreciate your concern for putting our lives and highway safety first and reducing the potential for increased road violence in our community by your support for MC22-22. We appreciate your attention to this request, and we look forward to your response.

Hilary Phillips-Rogers
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Matt Quinn
Immediate Past President
CHERRYWOOD

Cordially yours,

Hilary Phillips-Rogers
President, GOCA

Attachment: GOCA Resolution Supporting Speed Cameras on MD 200 ICC
cc: GOCA Home Owner Associations

**Relating To Publicly Demonstrating Greater Olney Civic Association Support For
Maryland General Assembly Legislation to Reduce Dangerous Motor Vehicle Speeding On The
MD 200 Intercounty Connector (ICC) In Montgomery County**

WHEREAS, Article III of the [Greater Olney Civic Association, Inc. \(GOCA\) By Laws](#) specifies that the “objectives of GOCA shall be to study, plan, coordinate, and promote the overall civic, economic, ecologic, and cultural welfare of the community within the Olney Master Plan Area, Montgomery County, Maryland as determined by its Members or their elected Representatives.”

WHEREAS, the US Department of Transportation National Highway Safety Administration recently [reported](#) “the largest six-month increase ever recorded in the Fatality Analysis Reporting System’s history. An estimated 20,160 people died in motor vehicle crashes in the first half of 2021, up 18.4% over 2020.”

WHEREAS, the Maryland Department of Transportation Zero Deaths program [reported](#) 463 fatalities in motor vehicle crashes in Maryland in 2021 as of November 9, 2021.

WHEREAS, in Montgomery County, there were 41 crash-related fatalities in 2020, the most in 10 years. ([Vision Zero presentation, slide 10](#))

WHEREAS, the MD 200 Intercounty Connector (ICC) highway in Montgomery County is the only major State highway crossing through the Olney master plan region, with access points at Georgia Avenue; with average annual daily traffic reaching a high of 58,700 vehicles in 2019 (pre-pandemic) between 370 and 97 (Georgia Avenue). The ICC is easily accessed by Olney homeowners, but is mostly used by statewide and national through traffic.

WHEREAS, Olney homeowners have complained about excessive speeding on the ICC over the past four years; including vehicles speeding as fast as 190 mph in a 60 mph limit zone; and understand that MDTA law enforcement policy prohibits chasing speeding vehicles except in the case of suspected felonies.

WHEREAS, Maryland State legislators representing District 19 and District 14, that include Olney and the ICC, will be introducing bill MC22-22, “An Act concerning Montgomery County Speed Monitoring Systems – Maryland Route 200 (Intercounty Connector),” which would call for the placement of speed monitoring systems between exit ramps on the ICC; and a penalty not to exceed \$40 for violating vehicles.

WHEREAS, speed or traffic cameras are a proven-effective method of speed enforcement that Montgomery County government public safety officials currently [endorse and have increased in use](#) to promote road safety. The technology provides speed enforcement that does not require stopping violating motorists.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Greater Olney Civic Association Board hereby endorses Maryland speed monitoring legislation bill MC22-22, and will share the GOCA endorsement publicly on the GOCA website as well as with members of the State and local legislatures, member homeowner associations and the news media.

Recorded January 11, 2022