

KENNETH P. KERR, ED.D  
*Legislative District 3*  
Frederick County

Health and Government Operations  
Committee

*Subcommittees*

Chair, Government Operations and  
Health Facilities

Insurance and Pharmaceuticals



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

*Annapolis Office*  
The Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 209  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3240 · 301-858-3240  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3240  
Ken.Kerr@house.state.md.us

*District Office*  
4539 Metropolitan Court, Suite 257  
Frederick, Maryland 21704  
301-360-3505

**HB 278 – Urban State Highways – Speed Limits --Exceptions**

HB 278 authorizes the State Highway Administration to reduce the speed limit on specific urban highways by up to 5 miles per hour without undertaking a traffic or engineering study. The bill applies to State-owned and -maintained highways that do not restrict non-motorized access and where highways are located in incorporated municipalities. The bill also applies to locations identified by the U.S. Census Bureau Designated Urban Areas where pedestrians walk adjacent to highways—consider highway 295 which comes into Baltimore City where Ravens stadium and Orioles Park are located. Fans frequently walk on the sidewalks adjacent to the stadiums.

This bill is needed because roadway designs have not changed with development trends over the last 60 years. Yet, the State continues to respond to increasing requests for speed limit reduction on State highways where posted speed limits no longer correspond to driving realities on these roads. This bill supports Maryland's commitment to Vision Zero. Data shows that in Maryland and nationwide more frequent crashes occur on roads in urban areas where density is higher. And more severe crashes occur on State-owned roads where speeds are generally higher.

More frequent and severe crashes occur in center cities and suburban activity centers that are not accommodating the same type of traffic today as they once did. Providing SHA with the authority to reduce posted speed limits by 5 mph without a formal traffic study provides opportunities for proactive and incremental change when it becomes clear that Speed limit reductions are low-cost countermeasures that begin to address the need to retrofit roadways in urbanized areas.

The historical imbalance between accessibility and mobility in urban areas of Maryland must be addressed through a proactive approach to Vision Zero that accounts for underserved communities, local roadway context, and land-use. By focusing on roadways already defined in statute as Urban Highways, this proposal addresses areas that are known to have increased activity and more frequent crashes. By passing this legislation, Maryland Department of Transportation would have another proactive engineering safety countermeasure to help Maryland prioritize safety in critical areas of the network.

Where would this legislation potentially apply? • This legislation authorizes the posted speed limit reduction of 5mph on Urban Highways in the State. Per State law, an Urban Highway is a State-owned Road that is:

- ▪ Constructed with a curb and gutter and an enclosed storm drainage system;
- ▪ Located in an urban area and on which is located a public facility that creates appreciable pedestrian traffic along the highway from adjacent areas;
- ▪ Located within urban boundaries as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau; and, stadium, and
- Located within the boundaries of a municipal corporation.

We respectfully request a favorable report for this important bill.