

March 20, 2025

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, Environmental and Transportation Committee
251 House Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

***RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 978 – Baltimore County – Speed Monitoring Systems
- Interstate 695 and Interstate 83***

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 978 and offers the following information for the Committee’s consideration.

HB 978 authorizes the State Highway Administration (SHA) to place and use speed monitoring systems on I-695 and I-83 in Baltimore County and provides for the operation of these systems. Fines collected from violations must be used to cover the cost of roadway and safety improvements on I-695 and I-83 in Baltimore County.

SHA appreciates efforts to improve highway safety in Baltimore County and agrees that automated speed enforcement can be an effective tool for this. The bill language is modeled after the work zone safety control program authorized under Article – Transportation, §21-810, with applicable changes. Unlike other local speed monitoring programs, this bill requires a different level of involvement from SHA and would create two different standards of speed monitoring programs within the Administration.

SHA understand that the delegation plans to offer several amendments to HB 978, for the Committee’s consideration. Some of these amendments aid SHA in operation of this new program. However, there are several operational items in the amended bill that the Committee should consider:

- It should be noted that the Maryland Department of State Police (MSP) does not currently mail citations or warnings as required by the bill. Historically, that function has been done by an SHA contractor.
- As written, the bill limits operations to no more than four cameras in each direction for I-695 and no more than three cameras in each direction on I-83 in Baltimore County. SHA respectfully believes that the number of cameras in use should be determined by SHA based on safety data and operational conditions along the subject state roadways.

- SHA notes the addition of language prohibiting the placement of speed monitoring cameras within 5 miles of each other, for cameras operating in the same direction. This language may inhibit SHA from placing cameras in areas where they are needed most. Further, it is unclear how this prohibition will operate if work zone cameras are in use within 5 miles of a camera proposed under HB 978. If read to limit the placement of work zone cameras or to require that cameras authorized under this bill be pulled offline in the event a work zone is established within 5 miles of these cameras, the language may compromise overall safety within the corridor. If such a prohibition is to be included, the Committee may wish to clarify that the prohibition is applicable only to the placement of cameras authorized under HB 978.
- For the operation of the Safe Zones program, SHA does not currently have signage indicating that speed monitoring systems are in use. SHA believes this requirement in the bill will add to the operational costs and complexity of this program.¹ General photo enforcement signing is normally required, but upkeep of changeable signage adds complexity to the program administration.

The Maryland Department of Transportation values our partnership with the Maryland General Assembly to provide safe roads for everyone. The State Highway Administration appreciates the bill sponsor's commitment to safety and is currently working with them on amendments to resolve operational challenges with the provisions in this bill. The Administration believes the language in House Bill 978 and the proposed program should be modeled after other successful County speed monitoring system programs in our State, with the State Highway Administration administering the speed monitoring system to achieve the desired outcome and most effective safety results. The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the Committee consider this information when deliberating House Bill 978 and the Delegation amendments.

Respectfully submitted,

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¹ See from page 4, line 26 to page 5, line 2. SHA estimates the fiscal impact of additional signage upgrade to be approximately \$50,000.