



## Montgomery County's Advocates for Better Transportation

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### Testimony on HB 0915, Out-Of-State Driver Accountability

Favorable with Amendments

Environment & Transportation Committee, February 20, 2025

presented by Benjamin Ross

The District of Columbia's enactment last year of its Strengthening Traffic Enforcement, Education, and Responsibility Act (the "STEER Act") was a breakthrough in making streets safer. The Action Committee for Transit urges the General Assembly to emulate D.C. by adopting an expanded version of HB 0915 that applies to all out-of-state drivers and is not limited to D.C. residents.

We are not able to support the current version of HB 0915, which singles out D.C. drivers for Maryland enforcement. Selective enforcement could be misinterpreted as retaliation against the District for enforcement of the STEER Act against Maryland lawbreakers. It would also legitimate the [widespread practice](#) of evading traffic enforcement by illegally registering Maryland residents' cars in Virginia.

The need for HB 0915 is created by the epidemic of death and injury on our roads. Crash rates are already much too high and are now rising. Since the pandemic, dangerous driving has become more frequent. The problem is much too big to be solved by human enforcement alone. Our sprawling road network is far too big to put an officer at every corner. Violations such as speeding, failure to stop at crosswalks, and red-light running are pervasive. Only automated enforcement with cameras can quell routine violations and keep up with the worst scofflaw drivers.

Traffic cameras also combat racial discrimination in traffic enforcement. They replace a human enforcement agent, who might have conscious or unconscious bias, and issue tickets based strictly on the movement of the vehicle and not the face of the driver.

But automatic enforcement only works when the state collects the fines the cameras impose. This is a particular problem with cars registered out of state, whose owners cannot be forced to pay when they renew their registration. In D.C., out-of-state scofflaws were able to rack up thousands of dollars of unpaid fines with impunity. The STEER Act gives D.C. the tools it needs to combat the problem. Maryland needs to do the same.

We therefore support passage of HB 0915 with the following amendments:

- In Sections 26-205(A) and (B), replace “A resident of the District of Columbia” with “A non-resident of Maryland,” and
- In Section 26-205(C), replace “A motor vehicle registered in the District of Columbia” with “A motor vehicle not registered in Maryland.”