

February 19, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

***RE: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 559 – Transportation – Study on Speed Limits –
Interstate 495 and Connected Highways***

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on Senate Bill 559 and offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

SB 559 directs MDOT to conduct a study of highways that connect to I-495, evaluating speed limits, congestion, and the prevalence of speeding tickets and crashes where those highways connect to I-495. From that study, MDOT is to analyze the feasibility of requiring the speed limit to deviate by only 5 miles per hour where a highway in the State connects to I-495 and recommend measures for such a requirement. In execution of the study, MDOT must consult with local officials and stakeholders with expertise and familiarity with traffic safety issues on these corridors. MDOT must report its findings to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 31, 2025.

MDOT is strongly committed to the Vision Zero goals endorsed by the General Assembly and seeks to use appropriate speed management techniques, including reductions to speed limits, to address identified safety issues. The State Highway Administration (SHA) regularly evaluates safety issues on State roadways, particularly where identified by State and local elected officials and community stakeholders.

Through a variety of initiatives, SHA has evaluated corridors in the State regarding the safety of the corridor for all road users. This work includes those routes that connect to I-495. MDOT anticipates this legislation would largely replicate those efforts. In addition, the proposed scope and deadline for the study may warrant refinement, as the focus on the location where these highways meet I-495 may not capture other areas along the corridor where greater attention to safety hazards is warranted. There are 29 exits on I-495 in Maryland, and each would be studied under this bill if passed as introduced.¹

¹ In addition to the connected highways and exits, the entirety of the I-495 corridor would need to be reviewed to adequately assess the issues captured in this study. Completing a comprehensive study will require significant State resources, in addition to consultant services.

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MDOT would be happy to work with the sponsor to discuss particular areas of concern and discuss both the steps SHA has taken to evaluate those areas and issues where further evaluation may be warranted.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the Committee consider this information while reviewing Senate Bill 559.

Respectfully submitted,

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