



Senate Bill 118

Motor Vehicles – Speed Monitoring Systems – Penalties

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENTS

To: Judicial Proceedings Committee

Date: January 22, 2025

From: Sarah Sample

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS SB 118 WITH AMENDMENTS.**

This bill increases the penalties that can be imposed for a violation recorded by a speed monitoring device. These changes could help promote safety and deter aggressive, reckless, and negligent driving particularly in areas with families, children, and thousands of county workers.

More frequently than ever, horrific traffic accidents have claimed the lives or good health of Maryland residents and public servants. Not only are those who are using the roadways endangered, but so are the many county employees working on and near roadways every day, including local law enforcement officers, construction workers, surveyors, public works officials, and school bus drivers. If the rise in reckless driving is left unaddressed, these essential county workers will continue to have their lives put at risk just for doing their jobs.

Research has shown that sufficient penalties for speeding have the potential to change behavior and drive down the number of violations over time. Maryland law currently has a significant gap between what citation amount can be levied when an officer enforces the penalty at the time of the offense versus the penalty that can be applied for a violation caught on a speed camera. While the current camera penalty is limited to \$40, an officer-issued violation can carry a penalty up to \$290.

Counties believe increasing the speed camera fines to more accurately represent the severity of a violation may serve the public interest, but would offer one amendment to SB 118. While the new fees may prove necessary in some situations to change behavior, the current bill language makes the new penalties mandatory in set amounts, and does not allow any local discretion concerning first-time offenses, new drivers, and residents with other physical, mental, and financial challenges that could indicate a mitigating circumstance. **Changing the bill language to say the fine “may not exceed” the specified new amount (based on the excess speed recorded) would be preferable for local jurisdictions to best respond to the effects of camera deployment on public safety.**

Not only does SB 118 hold reckless drivers accountable for behaviors that have led to a surge in the frequency and severity of incidents that are regularly putting residents and county employees at risk, but it sets a new standard of safety in communities for all residents. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS SB 118 WITH AMENDMENTS.**