

Statement of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG)

TO: The Honorable Chair Marc Korman and Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee
FROM: Janie Nham, COG Transportation Planner
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RE: HB249 – Vehicle Laws – Automated Enforcement – Reciprocal Agreements, Arrangements, and Declarations
DATE: February 10, 2026

On behalf of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), we are writing to offer our support for the Vehicle Laws – Automated Enforcement – Reciprocal Agreements, Arrangements, and Declarations (HB249) and urge the Committee to issue a favorable report. We thank the Maryland Department of Transportation for introducing this necessary legislation.

As the association of local governments in metropolitan Washington, COG strongly supports ticket reciprocity efforts between Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia with the goal of improving pedestrian and roadway safety. COG represents 24 local governments in Northern Virginia, the District of Columbia, and Maryland including Charles County, Frederick County, Montgomery County, and Prince George’s County. Our region is home to nearly 6 million people, including 2.5 million from Maryland.

Addressing ticket reciprocity in the National Capital Region is one of the most impactful actions lawmakers can take to improve roadway and pedestrian safety. While the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia share common safety goals, differences in legal frameworks for automated traffic enforcement (ATE) have created gaps in enforcement and accountability across jurisdictional lines. These gaps undermine the effectiveness of proven safety tools and allow repeat violators to evade consequences simply by crossing state boundaries.

Automated traffic enforcement is an established and evidence-based component of roadway safety in Maryland and across the metropolitan Washington region. Research from international studies, national evaluations, and local programs consistently shows that ATE reduces crashes, lowers excessive speeds, and prevents severe and fatal injuries. An Insurance Institute for Highway Safety study showed that Montgomery County saw a 39 percent reduction in the likelihood of fatal and serious injury crashes in enforced corridors and a 62 percent reduction in the likelihood of excessive speeding. Studies show that vehicles with red-light citations or speeding citations of 21 mph or more over the limit are substantially more likely to be involved in crashes. Between January 1, 2019 and August 31, 2024, Virginia and Maryland vehicles accounted for 81 percent of all vehicles with 40 or more outstanding photo enforcement tickets in the District of Columbia.

These studies consistently demonstrate that ATE works—but only when enforcement is consistent and credible. Complementary legislation is also being considered by the Virginia General Assembly and already adopted in the District of Columbia. Stronger regional coordination, transparency, and equity safeguards can enhance fairness, accountability, and long-term program credibility. We strongly urge the committee to take a step towards improving pedestrian and roadway safety by supporting this bill.