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BILL NO.: **HB 1408**

TITLE: Motor Vehicles – Automated Traffic Enforcement Systems –
Impoundment

SPONSOR: Delegate Guyton

COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation

POSITION: **SUPPORT with Amendments**

DATE: March 5, 2026

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS with Amendments** House Bill 1408 – Motor Vehicles – Automated Traffic Enforcement Systems – Impoundment.

People get hurt or killed, and property gets destroyed, when drivers speed; pass school buses when children are in the road; run red lights; and commit other traffic law violations. The goal of traffic enforcement is to modify those unsafe behaviors by holding drivers accountable with citations and other enforcement measures.

Automated enforcement is a proven way to accomplish this. For example, in Baltimore County, we consistently find that speed cameras modify behavior, as speeding violations decrease after a camera is installed. When there are few violations, the camera gets moved to another location. Unfortunately, violations increase when the enforcement effect wears off, and then we have to rotate the camera back to the location.

There is a significant problem statewide with unaccountable drivers who commit traffic violations and do not pay their citations; because they are not paying, these scofflaw drivers do not modify their behavior, and they endanger public safety. Failure to pay also deprives local jurisdictions of funds needed to operate automated enforcement systems. Baltimore County currently has 5,992 unpaid citations, owing \$447,834, that would qualify for vehicle impoundment if this bill passes -- each offending vehicle on this scofflaw list has accrued three or more unpaid automated enforcement citations.

Some vehicles have an astonishingly high number of unpaid citations – for example, Baltimore County’s current scofflaw list using the criteria in House Bill 1408 shows a Maryland-registered vehicle with 65 unpaid citations; two vehicles with 42 each; one with 38; and one with 37 unpaid citations. For Virginia-registered vehicles, the scofflaw list shows a vehicle with 45 unpaid citations and a vehicle with 44 unpaid citations. These drivers are truly scofflaws and the

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authority provided by House Bill 1408 is needed to address their continued misconduct and modify their dangerous behavior.

One part of the problem are vehicles registered out of state, because there is no way to enforce the citation if there is no reciprocity with their state of registration, like Virginia. In Baltimore County alone, we have 1,685 unpaid citations for vehicles registered out of state that would qualify for impoundment under the proposed bill, totaling \$123,440. For Virginia-registered vehicles, Baltimore County is currently owed \$68,180 for 774 unpaid automated enforcement citations that have been issued to just 105 vehicles; 26 of those vehicles have at least one school bus camera violation.

After analyzing the data, we have determined that there is also a significant enforcement problem for vehicles registered in Maryland. In Baltimore County, we have 4,307 unpaid citations for Maryland-registered vehicles that would qualify for impoundment under the proposed bill, totaling \$324,394. There is an enforcement method for nonpayment, having the Maryland vehicle registration flagged so it cannot be renewed, but that can take up to three years.

Some owners finally pay their overdue citations when their registrations come up for renewal, we suspect many scofflaw vehicle owners are choosing to continue being a scofflaw, by not paying their citations and instead illegally registering their vehicles in another state – a state like Virginia, which will register cars for non-residents. Possessing impoundment authority will make it possible for local jurisdictions to enforce unpaid citations before owners can evade the citations by changing their registration.

The bottom line is that if we can get this authority to enforce automated traffic enforcement citations, we can stop the scofflaws and modify their behavior so they will respect school bus stop arms, red lights, speed limits, and other laws addressed by automated enforcement, and our streets will be made safer for the public. We will collect fines that are owed, thereby recovering costs of operating these enforcement systems and supporting public safety.

Baltimore County request a technical amendment, to authorize “a local authority” to impound vehicles instead of “a law enforcement agency” (line 23 and 27). Local jurisdictions can choose the most appropriate agency and methods to effect impoundments. Such impoundments for failure to pay citations such as parking citations are typically done by a civilian agency, such as a parking office in a Finance Office or in a Department of Public Works. Some jurisdictions use a “boot” program as an option that is less burdensome and less costly than towing every impounded vehicle.

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Accordingly, Baltimore County urges a **FAVORABLE with Amendments** report on House Bill 1408 from the House Environment and Transportation Committee. For more information, please contact Kayenda Twesigye, State Legislative Officer of Government Affairs at ktwesigye@baltimorecountymd.gov.