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Governor  
Aruna Miller  
Lieutenant Governor  
Kathryn Thomson  
Acting Secretary

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February 25, 2026

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

***RE: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 179 – 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 179 and offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

SB 179 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 at the point 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, 2026.

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 those identified by State and local elected officials and community stakeholders.

Through a variety of initiatives, SHA evaluates road user safety in corridors throughout the State. This work includes routes connecting to I-495. MDOT anticipates this legislation would largely replicate those efforts. SHA recently reduced speed limits on the following corridors in the Capital region: MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) from Silver Spring through Aspen Hill; MD 187 (Old Georgetown Boulevard) and MD 190 (River Road) in Bethesda; and MD 650 (New Hampshire Avenue) in Silver Spring.

SHA also has the following corridors under study for speed reductions in Montgomery and Prince George's counties: US 29 (Colesville Road) from Four Corners through Burnt Mills; MD 355 (Rockville Pike) from Bethesda through Rockville; MD 650 (New Hampshire Avenue) from Hillandale through White Oak; MD 201 (Kenilworth Avenue) from Berwyn Heights through Greenbelt; MD 202 (Landover Road and Largo Road) from Largo through Lake Arbor; MD 212 (Powder Mill Road) in Beltsville; MD 214 (Central Avenue) from Seat Pleasant through Largo;

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MD 4 (Pennsylvania Avenue) in Forestville; MD 414 (St. Barnabas Road) in Marlow Heights; MD 450 (Annapolis Road) from New Carrollton through Lanham; and US 1 (Baltimore Avenue) from College Park through Beltsville.

The proposed scope and deadline for the study warrants refinement, as the location focus of where roadways meet I-495 may not capture other areas along the corridors where greater attention to safety hazards is warranted. SHA follows a Context Driven approach that considers the land use, density, and other roadway features to ensure the design fits the character of the highway – for example, rural roads would be treated differently than urban core. The bill mandates speed studies over a large regional area without consideration for unique roadway contexts. There are 29 exits on I-495 in Maryland, and each would be studied under this bill if passed as introduced. In addition to reviewing 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.

SHA does not have funding identified or the necessary resources for the comprehensive study. In order to complete the study within the mandated timeframe, SHA would have to divert engineering resources from other critical statewide traffic safety initiatives, like the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan, crosswalk and signal upgrades, and local speed camera requests, to complete these studies.

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

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the Committee consider this information while reviewing Senate Bill 179.

Respectfully submitted,

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