



SafeRoadsMD

PLEASE SUPPORT SB 179
“Transportation - Study on Speed Limits -
Interstate 495 and Connected Highways”

MARYLAND COALITION FOR ROADWAY SAFETY, INC.
URGES MD SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE SUPPORT FOR SB 179

February 25, 2026

TO:

Honorable Senator Pamela Beidle, Chair
Honorable Senator Antonio Hayes, Vice Chair
Maryland General Assembly
Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

FROM:

John Seng, Chair
SafeRoadsMD - Maryland Coalition for Roadway Safety, Inc.
(202) 468-7682, JSeng@SafeRoadsMD.org
SafeRoadsMD.org

Re: Request for a Favorable Report on SB 179, “Transportation - Study on Speed Limits - Interstate 495 and Connected Highways”

Dear Chair Beidle and Vice Chair Hayes,

On behalf of SafeRoadsMD – Maryland Coalition for Roadway Safety, Inc., I respectfully write to express our support for Senate Bill 179, introduced by Senator Joanne Benson, which directs the Maryland Department of Transportation to study speed limits on highways that connect to Interstate 495.

We believe this study is both prudent and necessary, given the complexity of traffic operations on and around the Capital Beltway. The study’s requirement to identify relevant corridors, document speed limits, evaluate congestion patterns, and analyze crashes and enforcement data over the past five years will create an evidence base that should inform future policy decisions in nuanced but important ways.

At the same time, we emphasize that safety must remain paramount in the Committee’s consideration of this measure. Maryland’s speed management policies should be grounded in crash reduction and injury prevention — not simply driver convenience or perceived comfort.

Recent crash data remind us why careful analysis is warranted:

- **Speed-related crashes continue to be a significant safety challenge in Maryland.** On average over the past five years, there have been approximately 7,700 speed-involved crashes annually, including nearly 100 fatal speed-related crashes per year.¹
- **Certain segments of the Capital Beltway and its interchange corridors** — for example, between Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road and between I-270 and Connecticut Avenue — **have historically experienced hundreds of reported crashes annually**, reflecting the interaction of high traffic volumes and complex merging movements.²
- **News coverage report of incidents** along or near I-495, including a fairly recent rollover crash on I-495 in Oxon Hill, Prince George’s County in which **one person was killed and three others seriously injured in a single-vehicle rollover crash just before St. Barnabas Road on the Outer Loop of I-495.** This crash forced extended closures and investigation.³

These patterns illustrate that driver behavior — particularly excessive speed — is a persistent factor in the severity of crashes on and around the Beltway. This evidence also demonstrates that abrupt transitions in posted speeds, if not appropriately calibrated to roadway design and risk conditions, can create environments where drivers are uncertain about the appropriate operating speed, contributing to inconsistent speeds and unpredictable vehicle movements.

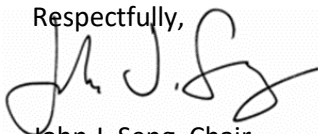
We appreciate that SB 179 directs MDOT to analyze not just crash statistics but also congestion, enforcement prevalence, and roadway conditions — and crucially, to assess the feasibility of limiting speed limit changes to a 5-miles-per-hour transition at Beltway connection points. This thoughtful approach recognizes that speed management is both an engineering and a behavioral challenge.

However, any recommendations that might arise from the study should prioritize reducing harm over reducing citation frequency. Where lower posted speeds are justified by design, conflict points, or crash history, those safety thresholds should guide decisions. Where speed transitions may contribute to driver confusion that elevates risk, appropriate countermeasures such as early warning signage, improved geometric design, and context-sensitive enforcement should be considered.

SafeRoadsMD supports SB 179 as a means to generate meaningful data that can inform balanced, safety-focused policy. We encourage the Committee to ensure that the study’s conclusions emphasize crash and injury prevention as the foremost criteria for any future policy or signage changes.

Thank you for your leadership and for your careful consideration of this important measure.

Respectfully,



John J. Seng, Chair
Maryland Coalition for Roadway Safety, Inc.

cc: SafeRoadsMD board

1. <https://zerodeathsmd.gov/resources/crashdata/>

2. <https://wtop.com/local/2021/12/the-most-crash-prone-dc-region-roads-as-reported-by-wtop/>

3. <https://wtop.com/maryland/2025/10/one-person-dead-three-others-seriously-injured-after-car-rolls-over-on-i-495-outer-loop/>