

Committee: Judicial Proceedings
Testimony on: SB 173 Transportation – Vehicle Laws – Automated Enforcement – Reciprocal Agreements, Arrangements, and Declarations
Position: Favorable With Amendments
Hearing Date: January 21, 2026

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports Senate Bill 173, which would improve pedestrian, bicycle and traffic safety by authorizing reciprocity for automated traffic enforcement. The bill addresses the problem of out-of-state drivers endangering communities when they violate traffic laws with impunity.

According to the December 2018 report of the Joint Committee on Federal Relations, Maryland’s local law enforcement agencies with red light camera programs have a better collection rate for in-state vehicles than for out-of-state vehicles. This is due to the inability to flag out-of-state vehicle registrations for non-renewal. As of June 2018, Montgomery County was owed \$2.7 million in red light camera citations incurred by vehicles registered out-of-state.

Red Light camera citation average compliance rates as of June 2018:

County	In-state	Out-of-state
Howard County 2013-2017 (26 cameras)	92%	78%
Montgomery 2010-2018 (51 cameras)	94%	81%
Prince George’s 2022 (46 cameras)	96.6%	82%

If enacted, Maryland law enforcement agencies could hold out-of-state drivers accountable by flagging violator vehicles for non-renewal, improving collection rates. Registration of Maryland vehicles with automated enforcement citations in partner jurisdictions could be similarly flagged, but not suspended.

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.

In addition to supporting the bill, we recommend that the Committee adopt an amendment to end the rental vehicle exemption on speed camera and red light camera citations. Maryland is one of only two states that have such an exemption.

The Committee may also want to consider an amendment to include reciprocity for toll enforcement with the District of Columbia. The District has no toll roads but as of August 2021, DC drivers owed \$13M in unpaid tolls to the Maryland Transportation Authority.

Because this bill is consistent with the Committee's efforts and would improve safety in the entire District-Maryland-Virginia region, we ask for your **favorable report with amendments**. Thank you for all you do to keep our communities safe by embracing the concept of Vision Zero.

Al Carr	Jane Lyons-Raeder	Josh Tulkin
Executive Committee	Transportation Chair	Director
Montgomery County	Sierra Club Maryland Chapter	Sierra Club Maryland Chapter
Sierra Club Group		

Appendix: 2018 Data on Red Light camera reciprocity:

County	average compliance rate		Value of unpaid out-of-state red light camera citations
	In-state	Out-of-state	
Howard County 2013-2017 (26 cameras)	92%	78%	\$225,225
Montgomery 2010-2018 (51 cameras)	94%	81%	\$2.7 million
Regional Automated Enforcement Center (11 partner agencies spanning 6 counties) 2013-2017	90%	67%	\$1.6 million

“Support of Potential Reciprocity Arrangements with Regional States: The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association would support any efforts to establish reciprocity agreements with regional states regarding automated enforcement violations (similar in nature to the Nonresident Violator Compact for moving violations). Most unpaid citations issued to out-of-state vehicle owners are for vehicles registered in surrounding jurisdictions, largely in the District of Columbia, Pennsylvania and Virginia. Maryland jurisdictions currently have limited ability to collect fines from out-of-state vehicle owners who choose not to pay. For in-state vehicle owners, the flagging of vehicle registrations, preventing renewal, is believed to be a significant reason why unpaid citations are eventually paid. That enforcement mechanism, however, is not currently available with respect to out-of-state vehicle owners.”

Source: September 2018 briefing materials in December 2018 Joint Committee on Federal Relations report to the Legislative Policy Committee