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March 4, 2026

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.  
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee  
2 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

***RE: Letter of Support with Amendment – Senate Bill 921 – Traffic Control Signal Monitoring and Speed Monitoring Systems – Exemptions from Liability – Vehicle Rental Companies***

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports Senate Bill 921, with amendments to include application to work zone camera programs.

SB 921 repeals the exemption that currently allows motor vehicle rental and leasing companies to avoid collecting or paying for automated enforcement citations incurred by rental vehicle drivers. This legislation aligns with MDOT’s Serious About Safety initiative and would ensure that all drivers are held responsible for their behavior behind the wheel and cannot avoid penalties simply by driving a rental vehicle.

The State Highway Administration (SHA) strongly supports the goal of this legislation - to increase accountability and improve safety on Maryland roadways. Speeding remains one of the most persistent and dangerous behaviors and contributing factors in more than one-third of all fatal crashes nationwide, and Maryland is no exception. Between 2024 and 2025, there were over 14,000 crashes on Maryland roadways that involved excessive speeding.

Maryland is committed to Vision Zero – the goal of eliminating all serious injuries and fatalities on our roadways by 2030. Reaching that goal requires a strategic and multi-layered approach, including the use of speed monitoring systems. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recognizes speed monitoring systems as a proven safety countermeasure. Furthermore, automated speed enforcement is an effective tool for improving safety as fixed cameras have the ability to reduce crashes by up to 54 percent.

As written, Senate Bill 921, as it relates to SHA speed monitoring programs, would only apply to speed monitoring systems installed along I-83 and I-695 in Baltimore County. It does not extend to SHA’s work zone program (Safe Zones). SHA recommends Senate Bill 921 be amended to include work zone speed control systems, as defined under Transportation Article §21-810, for the following reasons:

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.  
Page Two

- Work zones are among the most dangerous environments on any roadway. Roadway workers face serious risk of injury or death every time a speeding vehicle enters an active work zone. It is important that we hold all motorists accountable for dangerous and reckless driver behavior both in and outside of work zones. Thanks to the leadership of Governor Wes Moore, Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller and the Maryland General Assembly, SHA was able to enhance safety for roadway workers following the passage of the Maryland Road Worker Protection Act of 2024. Since then, crashes in work zones where speed cameras are present have reduced by 17 percent.
- Consistency across speed enforcement programs is essential to fair and effective administration. Allowing rental vehicle exemptions to persist in work zones while eliminating them elsewhere undermines the deterrent effect of speed cameras and creates confusion about rules of the road. SHA's recommended amendment ensures that the protections of Senate Bill 921 apply uniformly across all speed monitoring contexts — whether they be highway corridors, school zones, or work zones.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information during its deliberations and issue Senate Bill 921 a favorable report with SHA's recommended amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

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