

January 28, 2026

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

RE: Letter of Information – SB 10 – State Highway Administration – Application Approval

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) offers the following letter of information for the Committee's consideration of Senate Bill 10.

SB 10 requires the State Highway Administration (SHA) to approve, deny, or return as incomplete an application for a speed monitoring system within 90 days of receipt. It provides that, if SHA does not reply within the 90-day timeframe, the application will be considered approved.

SHA recognizes the importance of speed safety cameras, a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) proven safety countermeasure, to save lives and prevent serious injuries on Maryland roadways. Transportation Article § 21-809 provides authority to local governments to install automated speed enforcement (ASE) cameras in school zones, residential districts, and other site-specific locations. Local governments must coordinate with SHA when the requested location is along a state highway.

SHA has recently worked with local governments to collaborate on process improvements and implemented enhanced systems that support more efficient and timely processing of permit requests, including for ASE. Previously, the local SHA District Office and Office of Traffic and Safety (OOTS) shared responsibility for reviewing permit requests for ASE. SHA has streamlined the review process so that the review and approval of ASE permits is managed directly at the SHA District Office. Additionally, SHA implemented system improvements that allow for more effective tracking and management of permit applications. SHA believes that the administrative actions taken to improve the review process have created more predictable and reliable review timelines for ASE.

SHA's internal performance metrics require the timely processing of permit applications. While SHA makes every effort to process permit applications in a timely manner, there are some cases where reviews and approval take longer than anticipated for reasons beyond SHA's control including:

- **Local jurisdiction permit prioritization.** Local jurisdictions often send requests for ASE permits in large groups with multiple locations based on when they receive new enabling legislation for more cameras or when new vendors start. Often, permits are not prioritized, resulting in SHA having fluctuating demand for approvals, rather than providing a balanced workflow of permit requests. A standardized timeline requirement should consider reasonable limitations on the number of concurrent permit requests.
- **Local jurisdictions submitting incomplete applications.** SHA experiences circumstances where more information is required to effectively review and process the application or an application is

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incomplete. Requesting and awaiting submission of additional information, such as detailed plans, vicinity maps, speed studies, and local ordinances, adds time to the overall review and approval timeline. SHA typically partners with local governments, offering more time to provide updated permit information, while the bill text would necessitate more applications be returned for resubmission. This would trigger additional review cycles for local jurisdictions.

- **Right-of-way considerations.** ASE systems can be fixed units or portable (e.g. mounted on trailers) and they vary greatly in their application depending on roadway context. In some cases, ASE systems installed by local jurisdictions on State roadways require access to power and communications infrastructure or are installed on an SHA-owned structure. Additionally, ASE systems and their accompanying signage plans must be verified for appropriate right-of-way placement to not create sight line issues, which can be challenging in certain contexts.
- **School zone designation not in place at a requested location.** This requires a separate Memorandum of Action (especially if the school is located off a state highway). As required by law, a plan to install appropriate school zone signing must occur first, with the speed camera review occurring afterwards.
- **Communication and correspondence challenges.** Some local jurisdictions allow their ASE vendor to serve as the point of contact for their ASE program, including for permit application submissions to SHA. This can lead to miscommunication and delays in the transmission of pertinent documentation.

SHA remains committed to improving the safety and mobility of all road users and would be happy to meet with the sponsor to discuss opportunities to further improve and create efficiencies in the review and approval process for ASE permits.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information during their deliberations of Senate Bill 10.

Respectfully submitted,

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