

February 12, 2026

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

RE: Letter of Support – Senate Bill 487 – Motor Vehicles – Speed Monitoring Systems – Safety Corridors (Vulnerable Road User Protection Act of 2026)

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) offers the following letter in support of Senate Bill 487.

SB 487 authorizes the State Highway Administration (SHA) to use automated speed enforcement (ASE) in corridors identified as high risk for vulnerable road users (VRUs)¹ based on a quantitative evaluation published in the Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment. The VRU Safety Assessment analyzes crash data and stakeholder input on both state and local roads. The Assessment is required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) pursuant to the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) under Title 23, Section 148 of the U.S. Code and is updated as part of the published Maryland Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

SB 487 additionally authorizes local jurisdictions, with existing local enabling legislation, to install ASE in the identified safety corridors and requires SHA to consult with local jurisdictions in determining the placement of cameras on State routes. The SHA will not install VRU ASE on the corridor if the local jurisdiction has local enabling legislation and pursues the use of ASE first. In the case with locally requested operation, the SHA will permit the system within SHA right-of-way (ROW), but the system will be operated by the local jurisdiction.

Furthermore, SB 487 provides for the operation and management of these systems, as well as the distribution and use of funds generated by the civil penalties. The penalties follow the tiered fine structure enacted by the General Assembly in the 2025 Session. The bill also incorporates the data privacy protections that were enacted last session.

The FHWA has identified ASE as a proven safety countermeasure² in areas of high risk to vulnerable road users. Maryland is committed to the goal of Vision Zero by 2030, which requires the SHA to work with local and state partners to implement smart and safety focused solutions to reduce serious injuries and fatalities on our roadways.

¹ The bill defines a Vulnerable Road User (VRU) as an individual not traveling in a motor vehicle and includes pedestrians, bicyclists, other cyclists, individuals using personal conveyance or a mobility device, and individuals on foot in a highway work zone.

² Refer to https://highways.dot.gov/sites/fhwa.dot.gov/files/Speed%20Safety%20Cameras_508.pdf.

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Deaths from crashes involving pedestrians and bicycles are preventable. Speeding contributes to over one-third of all fatal crashes nationwide, with a disproportionate amount of those crashes involving pedestrians. In 2024, 570 people died on Maryland roads, and 170 (30%) of those were vulnerable road users. The FHWA Safe System approach acknowledges that humans make mistakes – motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians. However, deaths from these human errors can be avoided when safer speeds are properly maintained, giving drivers more time to slow or stop. According to research reported by USDOT, the risk of a crash resulting in a pedestrian fatality increases with speed and is as high as 90 percent at speeds of 40 mph and over, while in contrast pedestrians have a 90 percent survival rate at speeds of 20 mph or lower. Slowing down vehicles using speed safety cameras – especially in areas designated as high risk – will protect and ultimately save the lives of vulnerable road users.

The Report on Speed Monitoring in School Zones³ provides numerous detailed examples from Maryland counties along with national and international research studies, demonstrating the safety benefits of speed safety camera programs on reducing crashes, lowering prevailing speeds, saving lives, and reducing camera citations over time. Further, research has shown that the estimated economic benefits of reduced crashes substantially exceed the total fines paid by violators. The use of speed monitoring systems on Maryland roadways complements local law enforcement as an additional resource to reduce speeds, correct driver behavior, and create safer roadways for all.

Finally, MDOT notes that SB 487 requires that any revenue collected through the SHA's use of these speed monitoring systems, after covering the cost of implementing and administering the program, be used for purposes that make Maryland's roadways safer for all road users. As required in existing law, any revenue generated by local jurisdictions can be used solely for public safety purposes, including pedestrian safety programs.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information and issue Senate Bill 487 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

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³ Refer to Report on Speed Monitoring Systems in School Zones in response to HB 182, Ch. 505, 2025.