

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

House Bill 974 (Prince George's County Delegation)  
Environment and Transportation

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Prince George's County - Speed Monitoring Systems - Indian Head Highway  
PG 306-24

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This bill increases civil penalties for speed monitoring system (speed camera) violations on Maryland Route 210 (Indian Head Highway) in Prince George’s County. The bill also establishes additional civil penalties for second or subsequent violations captured by speed cameras on Maryland Route 210.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) revenues and expenditures increase, potentially by several hundred thousand dollars annually, beginning in FY 2025 due to an existing revenue-sharing requirement related to speed camera violations on Maryland Route 210. General fund revenues increase to the extent more violations are contested under the bill and due to the likelihood that additional contested violations are those for which higher, flat penalties must be assessed. The Judiciary can likely handle any increase in caseloads with existing resources.

**Local Effect:** The bill does not materially affect Prince George’s County finances or operations. However, the county may benefit from increased spending by the State Highway Administration (SHA) on safety improvements for Maryland Route 210.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Bill Summary/Current Law:** Under current law, the civil penalty for a citation issued through a speed monitoring system is capped at \$40 and is payable to the political

subdivision operating the speed monitoring system; otherwise, the citation may be contested in District Court. The District Court must prescribe a uniform citation form, as specified, and a civil penalty, which must be indicated on the citation, to be paid by persons who choose to prepay the civil penalty without appearing in District Court.

Chapter 806 of 2018 authorized Prince George's County, for five years, to place one speed camera at the intersection of Old Fort Road and Maryland Route 210, subject to specified requirements. Chapter 586 of 2019 repealed the limitation on the specific location of that speed camera and increased, to three, the number of speed cameras that could be placed on Maryland Route 210 in the county until the initial authorization terminated (originally September 30, 2023). Chapter 606 of 2023 again increased the number of speed cameras that may be placed on Maryland Route 210 (from three to six) and extended the termination date of the original authorization by five years (through September 30, 2028).

Also, pursuant to Chapter 147 of 2020, fines collected by Prince George's County as a result of violations enforced by speed cameras on Maryland Route 210 must be remitted to SHA for specified activities after cost recovery. (This requirement replaced a provision of Chapter 806 that required the fine revenues to be deposited into the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund.) SHA must solely use the fine revenues to assist in covering the costs of (1) examining the engineering, infrastructure, and other relevant factors that may contribute to safety issues on Maryland Route 210; (2) reporting its findings and recommendations on any solutions to these safety issues; and (3) implementing any solutions to these safety issues.

**Exhibit 1** shows the tiered, flat civil penalty levels required to be assessed for citations issued through a speed monitoring system on Maryland Route 210 under the bill. The additional fine levels for second or subsequent violations within a two-year period are also shown in Exhibit 1. Those civil penalties are *in addition to* the underlying penalty for exceeding the speed limit by a specified level.

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**Exhibit 1**  
**Penalties for Speed Camera Violations**  
**Under Current Law and the Bill**  
**Maryland Route 210 (Indian Head Highway)**

<b><u>Exceeding Posted Speed Limit by:</u></b>	<b><u>Current Civil Penalty</u></b>	<b><u>Civil Penalty Under the Bill</u></b>
12-21 miles per hour		\$40
22-31 miles per hour		90
32-41 miles per hour	Capped at \$40	160
42-51 miles per hour		290
52+ miles per hour		530

<b><u>Subsequent Violations (within Two-year Period)</u></b>	<b><u>Additional Civil Penalty Under the Bill*</u></b>
Second violation	\$50
Third violation	150
Fourth violation	250
Fifth violation	300
Sixth or subsequent	350

\* These amounts are in addition to the higher civil penalties established for exceeding the speed limit by a specified level.

Note: The civil penalties established under the bill are not maximums.

Source: Department of Legislative Services

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**State Revenues:**

*District Court and General Fund*

Under the bill, a person issued a violation that is captured by a speed camera on Maryland Route 210 is potentially subject to a significantly higher civil penalty than under current

law, depending on the level at which the person exceeds the speed limit and whether the violation is a second or subsequent offense.

Additionally, because of the increased fine levels established by the bill, many more individuals issued speed camera citations for violations captured on Maryland Route 210 are expected to request a trial in District Court. If an individual is found guilty after a trial, the penalty is paid to the general fund, rather than the local government issuing the citation. However, the exact impact on general fund revenues depends on the number of guilty dispositions in court, which cannot be reliably determined at this time, and can only be determined with actual experience under the bill.

Additional factors may also affect overall citation volume (such as changes in driving behavior as drivers become aware of the new penalties for speeding under the bill). Despite these factors, because the fine amounts are considerably higher than those under current law, general fund revenues are expected to increase – even assuming a relatively low conviction rate.

#### *Transportation Trust Fund*

As noted above, Prince George's County is required to transfer net fine revenues (*i.e.*, revenues remaining after cost recovery) from speed camera violations on Maryland Route 210 to the Comptroller for distribution to SHA. Thus, under the bill, TTF revenues increase commensurately for the required activities.

In fiscal 2023, Prince George's County advises that approximately 13,743 citations were issued by speed cameras on Maryland Route 210 and subsequently satisfied with the county; after cost recovery, \$334,456 was remitted to the Comptroller for distribution to SHA. This figure excludes any citations issued that were contested in District Court, voided for technical reasons, or otherwise not paid. **Exhibit 2** shows the distribution of citations over the four-year period from fiscal 2020 through 2023, according to the categories established by the bill.

Taking into account the distribution of citations noted above, citation revenues remitted to SHA may increase by several hundred thousand dollars annually. However, this estimate does not take into account additional revenues that may be received from the subsequent offender penalties established by the bill, as data is not readily available to determine the number of repeat offenders over a two-year period. The higher penalty levels are also likely to have a deterrent effect, which may offset the higher revenues over time as driver behavior changes.

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**Exhibit 2**  
**Distribution of Citations on Maryland Route 210 by Speeding Level**  
**Fiscal 2020-2023**

<u>Miles Per Hour Over Speed Limit</u>	<u>Percent of Citations</u>
12-21 MPH	46.8%
22-31 MPH	40.2%
32-41 MPH	11.0%
42-51 MPH	1.9%
52+ MPH	0.2%

MPH: miles per hour

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Comptroller's Office; Department of Legislative Services

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**State Expenditures:**

*District Court*

The Judiciary advises that, despite an increase in the number of traffic court trials under the bill, the District Court can generally handle the increase with existing budgeted resources; nevertheless, the bill may have a more significant operational impact on the Prince George's County District Court, depending on the portion of individuals cited who choose to request a trial.

Additionally, as noted above, the District Court is required to prescribe a uniform citation form for speed monitoring systems. Because the penalties established under the bill are distinct from any other speed monitoring system violations in the State, the District Court notes the change may cause difficulties in maintaining a uniform citation.

*State Highway Administration*

To the extent SHA receives more revenues than it currently does under the existing revenue-sharing requirement noted above, TTF expenditures increase commensurately for

the required activities (*e.g.*, implementing solutions to safety issues on Maryland Route 210). As noted above, in fiscal 2023, \$334,456 was remitted to the Comptroller for distribution to SHA.

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### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 431 of 2023 and HB 431 of 2021.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Prince George's County; Comptroller's Office; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 29, 2024  
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