

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 1614

(Delegate Arentz, *et al.*)

Environment and Transportation

Judicial Proceedings

Maryland Transportation Authority - Lane Use Control Signal Monitoring
Systems

This bill authorizes the use of lane use control signal monitoring systems by the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) on an authority highway to record and cite instances of motor vehicles, in violation of State law, entering or traveling in a lane over which a red lane use control signal is shown. MDTA must adopt regulations establishing standards and procedures for the lane use control signal monitoring systems.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Nonbudgeted expenditures and revenues for MDTA increase, potentially significantly, beginning as early as FY 2027 to the extent that MDTA chooses to implement a lane use control signal monitoring system program under the bill's authority, as discussed below. General fund expenditures increase by \$22,900 in FY 2027 only for one-time programming costs for the Judiciary. The bill is not anticipated to materially affect District Court caseloads.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Potential minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary:

Citations and Penalties

Unless the driver of the motor vehicle received a citation from a police officer at the time of the violation, the owner or driver of a motor vehicle is subject to the following civil penalties if the motor vehicle is recorded by a lane use control monitoring system during the commission of a violation:

- for a first violation occurring on a single trip traveling in one direction, the civil penalty is \$90;
- for a second violation occurring on the same trip while traveling in the same direction as the first violation, the civil penalty is \$180; and
- for a third or subsequent violation occurring on the same trip while traveling in the same direction as the second, third, or subsequent violation, the civil penalty is \$270.

The District Court must prescribe a uniform citation form and civil penalty to be paid by a person who chooses to prepay the civil penalty without appearing in the District Court. A person who receives a citation may:

- pay the civil penalty, in accordance with the instructions on the citation; or
- elect to stand trial in the District Court for the alleged violation.

In an uncontested or a contested case, the civil penalty must be paid directly to the District Court, and the District Court must remit the penalty revenues to MDTA.

Additional Specifications and Requirements

The bill includes additional specifications and requirements that apply for lane use control signal monitoring systems, which are generally similar or identical to the specifications and requirements that apply to most other automated enforcement systems, including those related to:

- public notice that must be given before a system is fully implemented;
- signage that must be placed to alert drivers that a system is in use;
- required trainings for and administrative procedures that must be followed by system operators;
- the mailing of warning notices, instead of citations;

- processes for determining liability under extenuating circumstances (*e.g.*, for rental vehicles, for stolen vehicles, when registration plates are stolen, etc.);
- processes for adjudication and administration of violations and citations by the District Court;
- the authority of the Motor Vehicle Administration to refuse to register or transfer the registration of a vehicle with outstanding fines; and
- the payment of contractors who administer or process citations.

The bill authorizes multiple lane use control signal monitoring systems to be implemented and used at the same time in the same direction on an authority highway.

Current Law:

Maryland Transportation Authority

Since 1971, MDTA has been responsible for constructing, managing, operating, and improving the State’s toll facilities (for example, the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, the former Francis Scott Key Bridge, and the Governor Harry W. Nice Memorial/Senator Thomas “Mac” Middleton (Nice/Middleton) Bridge) and for financing new revenue-producing transportation projects. MDTA is a nonbudgeted State agency, meaning that its budget is not subject to the General Assembly’s appropriation process.

“Authority highway” means each highway, tunnel, and bridge within the jurisdiction of MDTA and each approach to these highways, tunnels, and bridges.

Automated Enforcement Systems

State law authorizes the use of various automated monitoring systems, including traffic control system monitoring systems, speed monitoring systems, school bus monitoring systems, vehicle height monitoring systems, and work zone speed systems. Generally, pursuant to §21-809(d)(5) of the Transportation Article, a person who receives a citation, may:

- pay the civil penalty, in accordance with the instructions on the citation; or
- elect to stand trial in the District Court for the alleged violation.

With specified exceptions, penalty revenues from automated enforcement systems, including speed monitoring systems, must be paid (1) to the administering State agency or local jurisdiction, in an uncontested case and (2) directly to the District Court (and consequently the general fund) in a case that is contested in District Court.

Lane Use Control Signals

Where lane use control signals are placed over the individual lanes of a highway, vehicular traffic may travel in any lane over which a green signal is shown but may not enter or travel in any lane over which a red signal is shown.

State Fiscal Effect:

Maryland Transportation Authority

Revenues and expenditures for MDTA are affected as follows beginning as early as fiscal 2027 to the extent that MDTA chooses to implement a lane use control signal monitoring system program pursuant to the bill's authorization:

- expenditures increase to install the devices and required signs and for other administrative expense that may be incurred for the operation of the program (e.g., mailing or contractual costs); and
- revenues increase as citations are issued and penalty revenues are remitted to MDTA by the District Court.

A preliminary analysis by MDTA estimates that the total cost of the program could exceed \$10.0 million annually if it contracts with a private vendor to implement the systems on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, the Baltimore Harbor Tunnel, the Fort McHenry Tunnel, the Nice/Middleton Bridge, and along the John F. Kennedy Memorial Highway. Based on this estimate, it is unclear whether citations revenues would fully offset MDTA's administrative costs for the program.

District Court

General fund expenditures for the Judiciary increase by approximately \$22,885 in fiscal 2027 for one-time programming costs. Because the bill requires the Judiciary to collect and remit to MDTA any penalty revenues collected from citations issued by lane use control signal monitoring systems, the bill does not affect general fund revenues.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

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Analysis by: Richard L. Duncan

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510