

**Department of Legislative Services**  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2026 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

Senate Bill 179  
 Finance

(Senator Benson)

**Transportation - Study on Speed Limits - Interstate 495 and Connected Highways**

This bill requires the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to conduct a study on the implications of speed limit changes on highways in the State that connect to I-495. In conducting the study, MDOT must consult with local officials and stakeholders that have expertise and familiarity with traffic safety issues faced by drivers who use highways in the State that connect to I-495. MDOT must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 31, 2026. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026, and terminates June 30, 2027.**

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) expenditures increase by approximately \$200,000 only in FY 2027 to complete the required study, as discussed below. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SF Expenditure	200,000	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$200,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

*Note: ( ) = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease*

**Local Effect:** Local governments can consult with MDOT as necessary and appropriate using existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The study must:

- identify the highways in the State that connect to I-495;
- identify the speed limits on the highways in the State that connect to I-495;
- analyze the traffic congestion over the past five years at locations where highways in the State connect to I-495;
- analyze the prevalence of speeding tickets over the past five years at locations where highways in the State connect to I-495;
- analyze the prevalence of accidents over the past five years at locations where highways in the State connect to I-495;
- analyze other hazards and incidents over the past five years at locations where highways in the State connect to I-495;
- analyze existing speed limits on the highways in the State that connect to I-495;
- analyze the feasibility of requiring the speed limit to deviate by only five miles per hour (mph) at locations where a highway in the State connects to I-495; and
- if feasible, recommend measures for requiring the speed limit to deviate by only five mph at locations where a highway in the State connects to I-495.

**Current Law:** As a modal unit within MDOT, the State Highway Administration (SHA) is responsible for more than 5,200 miles or approximately 16,800 lane miles of road, 2,500 bridges, 3,500 small stream crossing structures, and 80 miles of sound/noise barriers in the State. It also has responsibility for planning, designing, constructing, and maintaining these roads and bridges to safety and performance standards while considering sociological, ecological, and economic concerns. SHA must construct, reconstruct, and repair State highways as necessary and maintain them in good condition.

**State Expenditures:** Because SHA does not currently have the capacity to complete the study required by the bill, MDOT anticipates engaging a consultant to complete the study instead. (In the execution of their duties, MDOT and SHA often engage expert consultants to handle studies.) Therefore, TTF expenditures increase by approximately \$200,000 only in fiscal 2027 to hire a consultant to conduct the required study.

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## Additional Information

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See SB 559 of 2025 and SB 963 of 2023.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Department of Transportation; Maryland Municipal League; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 20, 2026  
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