



## House Bill 204

### *Traffic Control Signal Monitoring Systems – Duration of Yellow Signal (4-Second Act)*

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Environment and Transportation Committee

Date: February 8, 2018

From: Barbara Zektick

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 204. This bill requires a traffic control signal at an intersection to display a yellow light for at least four seconds if the signal is monitored by a red light camera.

Maryland already has adopted a professionally sound standard for yellow light duration, grounded in engineering. As explained clearly in the bill's fiscal note, traffic engineers set the timing of the duration of yellow lights based upon a variety of factors, as prescribed in the U.S. Federal Highway Administration's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), adopted into Federal law under 23 C.F.R 665 and adapted into the Maryland MUTCD pursuant to Maryland Code, Transportation Article, Section 25-104.

Under those preempting regulations, the duration of yellow lights at traffic signals, known as the "clearance interval," must be based upon variables such as the size of the intersection, legal speed of approaching vehicles, grade and slope of the road approaching the intersection, and closest adjacent traffic signal. These variables all factor into an engineering analysis of how to set the timing on a yellow light.

More importantly, as traffic conditions change over time due to new technologies and changes in behavior, best practices concerning signal timing may change. The increased use of semi-autonomous vehicles and fully autonomous vehicles would almost certainly affect proper signal timing, for example. Therefore, the most sensible path forward for Maryland is to continue to defer to the MUTCD for appropriate regulation of traffic signal timing.

For these reasons, MACo urges an **UNFAVORABLE** report on HB 204.