

Department of Planning and Budget
2026 General Assembly Session
State Fiscal Impact Statement

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ORIGINAL

Bill Number: HB1200

Patron: Williams

Bill Title: Department of Transportation; protective caps for guardrail posts; report.

Bill Summary: Directs the Department of Transportation to develop and adopt statewide standards and requirements for protective caps or other comparable shielding for exposed guardrail posts installed or replaced on or after July 1, 2027.

Budget Amendment Necessary: No

Items Impacted: N/A

Explanation: VDOT would have to cover the costs associated with this legislation by redirecting resources from other priorities.

Fiscal Summary: The bill directs the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to develop and adopt statewide standards and requirements for protective caps or other comparable shielding for exposed guardrail posts installed or replaced on or after July 1, 2027. The Department would need to research and evaluate commercially available products that meet the requirements of the bill. At this time, any costs associated with staff or outside resources required for the research, evaluation, design, and testing for the implementation of protective caps is indeterminate.

VDOT maintains approximately 7,500 miles of guardrail systems statewide. Consistent with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) asset management practices guardrail systems are assumed to have a 40–50-year service life and VDOT typically replaces approximately three percent of guardrail systems annually. VDOT estimates that the addition of the proposed equipment would cost approximately an additional \$11.4 million per year starting in FY28 and increasing by approximately three percent in subsequent years due to inflation.

The bill also requires an annual report on the implementation of the standards and requirements and the number of protective caps or other comparable shielding installed. Guardrails are installed and replaced nearly every day in the Commonwealth through routine maintenance, new construction, developer installations, and other agency activities. Additional efforts would be needed to implement reporting specifically on protective caps across all activities. The costs of any such efforts are indeterminate.

VDOT relies on revenues generated for highway maintenance operations, which are fully appropriated in the 2026 Budget Bill (H30/SB30). Therefore, additional appropriation is not needed. VDOT would have to cover the costs associated with this legislation by redirecting resources from other priorities.

Fiscal Analysis: The cost estimate provided by VDOT is based on replacing approximately 1,188,000 ft. of guardrails per year, requiring 190,080 posts and an estimated \$60 per post in supplies and labor to install the protective equipment. Beyond FY28, costs are expected to increase by three percent per year due to inflation.

Other: HB1202 also addresses guardrails.