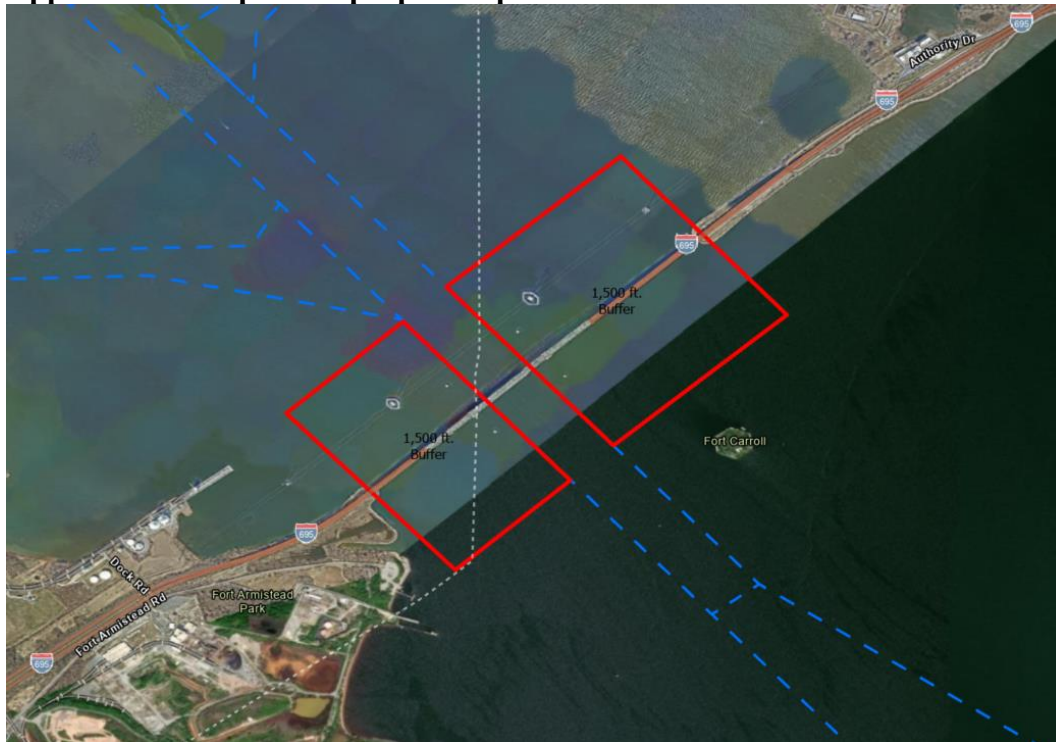


## **PATAPSCO RIVER – Francis Scott Key Bridge Project**

### **What was proposed?**

The Department proposed to establish two speed zones with a speed limit of 6-knots at all times in each zone in the Patapsco River for the area surrounding the demolition and construction site of the Francis Scott Key Bridge Project. Each zone extends 1,500 feet upstream and 1,500 feet downstream of the bridge. The zones extend towards the federal channel from the shoreline, but do not extend into the federal channel. There is a 1,000 foot channel, centered on the centerline of the main shipping channel, between the zones where the speed limit does not apply. The federal shipping channel is 800 feet wide and there is a buffer of 100 feet on each side of the shipping channel. Boat traffic will be able to maintain speed through that channel. If the U.S. Coast Guard establishes additional restrictions, such as prohibited zones, during the course of this project, those restrictions will take precedence.

### **Approximate map of the proposed speed zones:**



### **Why is this change necessary?**

The construction project is necessary for the demolition and rebuilding of the Francis Scott Key Bridge. Construction activities may be subject to unpredictable hazards due to the size and speed of vessels transiting this section of the Patapsco River. The speed limit in the zones will help protect workers, vessel operators, barges, and other equipment, from excessive wake actions. Construction for this project is scheduled to be completed in approximately four years. The Department anticipates removing the speed zones when the construction project is completed, however due to the extended timeline of the project and possibility of delay, the Department has not considered a sunset provision for this zone as it has with other speed zones instituted for construction projects with much smaller time durations.

**Who will this affect?**

All boaters.

**What is the specific regulatory action?**

Adopt new Regulation .05 under COMAR 08.18.19 Patapsco River.

**More Information:**

- [Key Bridge Rebuild](#)

**Was this change discussed with advisory bodies or other interested individuals?**

- The idea was scoped with the Boat Act Advisory Committee at their meeting in January 2025.
- The idea was scoped with the general public from February 19, 2025, through March 5, 2025.

**Regulatory Process**

- The Department followed our normal [procedures](#) as this concept moved forward.
- At the conclusion of the scoping process, the Department determined that the action is necessary and appropriate. The rules were promulgated following the Administrative Procedures Act described in Title 10, Subtitle 1 of the State Government Article Annotated Code of Maryland.
- The General Assembly's Administrative, Executive, and Legislative Review Committee reviews the regulatory proposal for fiscal and legal analysis.
- The proposal was printed by the Division of State Documents in the Maryland Register on May 30, 2025.
- A 30 day public comment period began on the day of publication.
- After review of the comments, the Department adopted the changes.
- The final action was published in the Maryland Register on July 25, 2025.

**Effective Date of Change**

August 4, 2025