

PATAPSCO RIVER – Francis Scott Key Bridge Project

What is being considered?

The Department is considering establishing a 6-knot effective at all times speed zone in the Patapsco River for the area surrounding the demolition and construction site of the Francis Scott Key Bridge Project. The zones will encompass the waters upstream and downstream of the bridge project, but will not affect the main shipping channel. A similar speed zone was in place on the east side of the river for a period of time after the bridge collapsed. 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 area under consideration:



Why is this change being considered?

The construction project is necessary for the demolition and rebuilding of the Francis Scott Key Bridge. Construction for this project is scheduled to begin shortly and be completed in approximately four years. Construction activities may be subject to unpredictable hazards due to the size and speed of vessels transiting this section of the Susquehanna River and large marine vessel wakes, that if present at the correct time can cause serious injury or harm to personnel and/or equipment. Thus, a 6-knot at all time speed zone will help protect workers, vessel operators, barges, and other equipment, from excessive wake actions. The Department anticipates removing this speed zone when the construction project is completed, however due to the extended timeline of the project and possibility of delay, the Department is not considering 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 current regulation for the area?

There is currently no speed zone in this area.

More Information:

- [Key Bridge Rebuild](#)

Has this change been discussed with advisory bodies?

This idea was scoped with the Boat Act Advisory Committee at their meeting in January 2025.