

Mr. CRAMER. And so these beautiful trees will become just as much a hazard from a standpoint of safety as any other obstructions put that close to the highway, is that not correct?

Mr. O'HARA. Yes, sir, they do become hazards.

Mr. CRAMER. And of course these are planted right in the direct line of where a car out of control would go if it got off the road and turned that corner?

Mr. O'HARA. Yes, sir.

Mr. CRAMER. They did not plant the trees on the right, where you might miss them, but they planted them on the left where, if you over-accelerate, you would run right into them. This appears to be being done all over the highway system.

Mr. O'HARA. Yes, sir. I will show you some trees shortly.

Mr. CRAMER. What price beauty?

Mr. O'HARA. Again in the same area you will notice this gore area on the right. Here is the sign mounted on 8-inch I-beams imbedded in concrete. The guard rail, to shield the motorist from running into it, is placed in front. The sign could have been placed over in here off the right shoulder and cantilevered as the Glen Echo sign is.

Again you will notice they have taken part of the shoulder here. You see the shoulder starts back here, beyond the sign.

They took part of the shoulder, apparently, to put this sign in here. Here is a light pole mounted right behind or at least adjacent to that piece of guardrail. Notice one thing, if you will. This light pole is located very close to the roadway. You will notice the bracket arm is a lot shorter than the one on this light pole over here, which is close to the bridge where I was standing.

The same situation is true of the other light poles on this curve. They have a shorter bracket arm. We see that there are longer bracket arms available where the poles could have been put back further from the roadway. The shoulder again is lost up in this area beyond the gore. They take it back again, and that is for this lane which is coming in over here. There is merging traffic from here and from here and from here.

This lane on the left is a fast lane off 495. This is your collector-distributor road on the right, your exit ramp to River Road turning right at the gore area, and your entrance ramp from River Road to get onto the Capital Beltway or the Cabin John Parkway, beyond the grass plot above the sign.

This is typical of gore areas in Maryland.

In reviewing records I found this accident, which occurred last year, on the Capital Beltway, in Prince George's County. In this accident the motorist was in this right lane, which is the deceleration lane to leave the beltway. This second lane is your slow lane. The motorist hit this curb on the right, which is about nine inches in height. He bounced off the curb, slid over into the slow lane, and sideswiped the other vehicle.

The two of them ended up sliding into the guard rail, which is pointed like an arrow. There is a piece that comes out this way from the right, and another piece that comes straight at you from this direction, behind the vehicles.