

Late Testimony
February 7, 2012 2:00pm

LATE TESTIMONY

Rep. Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair
Rep. Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair
COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Dear Chairman. Keith-Agaran and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary

Subject: **Support for HB 2790**

The State Highway Safety Council supports HB 2790, which establishes the photo red light imaging detector system program.

According to FARS 2006-2010, there were 7 fatalities attributed to red light running. This bill would allow counties to implement photo red light imaging detector systems in areas of high risk or high frequency of crashes. Red light cameras have been studied for over 10 years, and have been used in over 500 communities across the U.S. They have been shown to reduce overall crash severity with collisions involved in intersections.

The State Highway Safety Council (SHSC) advises the DOT on matters relating to the programs and activities of the State in the field of highway safety. SHSC members include representatives from public, private, and all four counties.

Thank you for allowing us to testify.

Sincerely,

State Highway Safety Council

Jennifer Atkins
16-149 `Auli`i St.
Kea`au, HI 96749

LATE TESTIMONY
LATE TESTIMONY

February 9, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to strongly support HB 2790 which would establish a Photo Red Light Running program for the state of Hawai`i. Such programs have been highly successful in other states and I believe it would greatly increase safety for all users of Hawai`i roadways by reducing red light running behavior. I have personally witnessed far too many near misses when careless drivers barreled through intersections. I would like to suggest, however, that the definition of how funds from this program be used be amended to include improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities and for pedestrian and bicyclist education programs.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify.

Jennifer Atkins

Randy Steiner
2051 10th Avenue
Honolulu, HI 96816

LATE TESTIMONY

February 9, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

I strongly support HB 2790, the proposed Photo Red Light Running program for the state of Hawai'i. I believe it would reduce red light running and make our roadways safer. Other states have such this type of program successfully. I do think the funds generated by this program should also be used to make improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities and for pedestrian and bicyclist education programs.

Mahalo,

Randy Steiner

HO No. 2110

Supported 2/9/12

Red-Light Running Traffic Camera Programs
Cities in Washington State

LATE TESTIMONY

R = red light camera; S = speed camera

City	Camera Type	Population	Urban Area
Auburn	R	70,180	Puget Sound
Bellevue R	R	122,363	Puget Sound
Bremerton R	R	37,729	Puget Sound
Burien R S	R S	33,313	Puget Sound
Everett R	R	103,319	Puget Sound
Federal Way	R S	89,306	Puget Sound
Fife R	R	9,173	Puget Sound
Issaquah R S	R S	30,434	Puget Sound
Lacey R	R	42,393	TRPC
Lake Forest Park	R	12,598	Puget Sound
Lakewood R	R	58,163	Puget Sound
Longview R S	R S	36,648	CWCOG
Lynnwood R S	R S	35,836	Puget Sound
Monroe R S	R S	17,304	Puget Sound
Moses Lake R	R	20,366	
Mountlake Terrace	R	19,908	Puget Sound
Puyallup R	R	37,022	Puget Sound
Redmond*	R S	54,144	Puget Sound
Renton R S	R S	90,927	Puget Sound
SeaTac R	R	26,909	Puget Sound
Seattle	R S	608,660	Puget Sound
Spokane R	R	208,916	SRC
Tacoma R S	R S	198,397	Puget Sound
Wenatchee R	R	31,925	WCOG

* Program in flux

Traffic camera programs are generally in use in urban communities at locations with higher traffic volumes. Public safety is the 'driver' behind implementation. Locations are determined by number of accidents, types of accidents and severity of accidents. Three 'E's of traffic safety are followed: Engineering, Education, & Enforcement.

David L. Zevenbergen

Formerly Washington Dept. of Transportation, Hazard Elimination Safety Program Mgr.

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Additional Q&A (IHHS & HLDI):

Q&A: Red light cameras

September 2011

How often do drivers run red lights?

A study conducted during several months at 5 busy intersections in Fairfax, Virginia, prior to the use of red light cameras found that, on average, a motorist ran a red light every 20 minutes at each intersection.² During peak travel times, red light running was more frequent. Analysis of red light violation data from 19 intersections without red light cameras in 4 states found that 1,775 violations occurred over 554 hours, for a violation rate of 3.2 per hour per intersection.³

In a 2010 telephone survey by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, 93 percent of drivers said it's unacceptable to go through a red light if it's possible to stop safely, but one-third reported doing so in the past 30 days.⁴ In a 2011 Institute survey in 14 large cities (population greater than 200,000) with long-standing red light camera programs, 82 percent of drivers believed running red lights is a serious threat to their personal safety, and almost all (93 percent) believed running red lights is unacceptable. Still, 7 percent of drivers said that they had driven through a light after it had turned red at least once in the past month.⁵

What kinds of drivers are most likely to run red lights?

A 1996 Institute study of red light runners at one Arlington, Virginia, intersection found that, as a group, they were younger, were less likely to use safety belts, and had poorer driving records than drivers who stopped for red lights. Red light runners were more than three times as likely to have multiple speeding convictions on their driver records. No gender differences were found between violators and drivers who did not run red lights.⁶

An Institute analysis of 2009 fatal red light running crashes compared the red light runners with the drivers involved in these crashes who did not run the red. The red light runners were more likely to be under 30 and male and to have prior crashes, alcohol-impaired driving convictions, and citations for speeding and other moving violations. The red light runners also were more likely to be speeding or alcohol-impaired at the time of the crash, and less likely to have a valid driver's license.

Isn't conventional police enforcement sufficient?

Police can't be everywhere at once, and red light cameras allow officers to focus on other enforcement needs.

Moreover, enforcing traffic laws in dense urban areas by traditional means poses special difficulties for police, who in most cases must follow a violating vehicle through a red light to stop it. This can endanger motorists and pedestrians as well as officers. Traffic stops in urban areas also can exacerbate traffic congestion.

What safety benefits do red light cameras provide?

A 2011 Institute study comparing large cities with red light cameras to those without found the devices reduced the fatal red light running crash rate by 24 percent and the rate of all types of fatal crashes at signalized intersections by 17 percent.⁷

Previous research has shown that cameras substantially reduce red light violations and crashes. Studies by the Institute and others have found reductions in violation rates or violations ranging from 40 to 96 percent after the introduction of cameras.^{2,8,9} Institute studies in Fairfax, Virginia, and Oxnard, California, found that in addition to the decrease in red light running at camera-equipped sites, the effect carried over to signalized intersections not equipped with red light cameras, indicating community-wide changes in driver behavior.

In Oxnard, significant citywide crash reductions followed the introduction of red light cameras, and injury crashes at intersections with traffic signals were reduced by 29 percent.¹⁰ Front-into-side collisions – the crash type most closely associated with red light running – at these intersections declined by 32 percent overall, and front-into-side crashes involving injuries fell 68 percent.

An Institute review of international red light camera studies concluded that cameras lower red light violations by 40-50 percent and reduce injury crashes by 25-30 percent.¹¹

Don't red light cameras encourage drivers to stop short, increasing the risk of a rear-end collision?

Some studies have reported that while red light cameras reduce front-into-side collisions and overall injury crashes, they can increase rear-end crashes. However, such crashes tend to be much less severe than front-into-side crashes, so the net effect is positive.

A study sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration evaluated red light camera programs in 7 cities.¹² The study found that, overall, right-angle crashes decreased by 25 percent while rear-end collisions increased by 15 percent. Results showed a positive aggregate economic benefit of more than \$18.5 million in the 7 communities. The authors concluded that the economic costs from the increase in rear-end crashes were more than offset by the economic benefits from the decrease in right-angle crashes targeted by red light cameras.

Not all studies have reported increases in rear-end crashes. The Cochrane Collaboration, an international public health organization, reviewed 10 controlled before-after studies of red light camera effectiveness.¹³ Based on the most rigorous studies, there was an estimated 13-29 percent reduction in all types of injury crashes and a 24 percent reduction in right-angle injury crashes. The review did not find a statistically significant change in rear-end injury crashes.

Isn't longer yellow signal timing more effective than using red light cameras to reduce red light running?

Providing adequate yellow time and a brief phase when all signals are red is important and can reduce crashes, but those things alone don't eliminate the need for or potential benefits of red light cameras. Studies have shown that increasing yellow timing to values associated with guidelines published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers¹⁴ can significantly decrease the frequency of red light violations.^{15,16,17} In addition, a 2002 Institute study found that injury crashes at urban intersections fell 12 percent after the yellow and all-red traffic signal timing was modified according to ITE guidelines.¹⁸

An Institute study conducted in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, evaluated effects on red light running of first lengthening yellow signal timing by about a second and then introducing red light cameras.⁹ While the longer yellow reduced red light violations by 36 percent, adding camera enforcement further cut red light running by another 96 percent.

Can anything else be done to reduce the number of red light running crashes?

Signalized intersections can be replaced altogether by roundabouts, which have dramatically fewer injury crashes. However, it's not feasible to replace every traffic light with a roundabout, and not every intersection is appropriate for a roundabout. Better enforcement of traffic signals using cameras is a solution that can quickly be implemented on a large scale.

Do red light cameras violate motorists' privacy?

No. Driving is a regulated activity on public roads. By obtaining a license, a motorist agrees to abide by certain rules, such as to obey traffic signals. Neither the law nor common sense suggests drivers should not be observed on the road or have their violations documented. Red light camera systems can be designed to photograph only a vehicle's rear license plate, not vehicle occupants, although in some places the law requires a photograph of the driver.

Isn't the main purpose of red light cameras to make money?

No. The objective of photo enforcement is to deter violators, not to catch them. Signs and publicity campaigns typically warn drivers that photo enforcement is in use. Revenue is generated from fines paid by drivers who continue to run red lights, but this is a fundamental component of all traffic enforcement programs. Ideally, ticket revenue should decline over time as the cameras succeed in deterring would-be red light runners. Independent audits of red light camera enforcement have shown that in some jurisdictions fines exceeded program costs, while in others, the programs didn't break even.^{19,20}

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