

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5083

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Transportation, February 26, 2007

Title: An act relating to the use of automated traffic safety cameras in state highway work zones.

Brief Description: Authorizing the use of automated traffic safety cameras in state highway work zones.

Sponsors: Senators Kilmer, Swecker, Murray and Keiser.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/15/07, 2/26/07 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5083 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Marr, Vice Chair; Murray, Vice Chair; Swecker, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Clements, Delvin, Jacobsen, Kastama, Kilmer, Pflug, Sheldon and Spanel.

Staff: Hayley Gamble (786-7452)

Background: Current law allows the use of automated traffic safety cameras under certain conditions and only in certain areas. Local governments may use "automated traffic safety cameras" (cameras) subject to the following conditions: (1) an ordinance must first be enacted by the local legislative authority allowing their use to detect only stoplight, railroad crossing, or school speed zone violations and setting forth public notice and signage provisions; (2) use of the cameras is restricted to two-arterial intersections, railroad crossings, and school speed zones only; (3) pictures may only be taken of vehicles and vehicle license plates and only while an infraction is occurring, and must not reveal driver or passenger faces; (4) all locations where a camera is used must be clearly marked by signs indicating the presence of a camera zone; (5) infraction notices must be mailed to the registered owner of the vehicle within 14 days of the infraction, and may be responded to by mail; and (6) infractions detected through the use of cameras are not part of the registered owner's driving record.

The registered owner of a vehicle is responsible for an infraction detected by an automated traffic safety camera unless the owner states under oath that the vehicle involved was, at the time, stolen or in the care, custody, or control of another person.

Infractions detected through the use of cameras must be processed in the same manner as

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parking infractions.

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has an increasing number of highway construction work zones around the state. Speeding is a major factor in work zone crashes. WSDOT has implemented a number of practices to try and reduce work zone collisions.

Summary of Bill: The automated traffic safety camera law is expanded to include authorizing the use of cameras in designated construction work zones on state roadways when workers are present. The fine issued for state roadway construction zone infractions must be \$137. Fines would still be treated as a parking infraction and would not appear as part of a driving record. Washington State Patrol would issue the fines.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY RECOMMENDED SUBSTITUTE AS PASSED COMMITTEE (Transportation): Thirty-two of the \$137 construction zone infraction fine must be remitted to the State Treasurer for deposit into the state highway patrol account.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill has the potential to reduce work zone speeding and will help reduce the number of injury accidents, improving the safety of highway workers and the traveling public. This is a new tool to improve the safety of highway workers. Traffic cameras will work as a deterrent to speeding and have been shown to be particularly effective at reducing the number of drivers traveling at over ten mph above the speed limit. Cars are driving too fast through work zones and we need to protect the workers in these areas.

OTHER: If this bill is implemented there needs to be an accompanying education effort. The focus needs to be on changing driving behavior not giving out tickets. Conspicuous police cars offer another option as a speeding deterrent.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Mike Dornfeld, WSDOT; Jeff DeVere, Washington State Patrol; Amber Lewis, Washington Federation of State Employees; Steve Lind, Washington Traffic Safety Commission.

OTHER: Dave Overstreet, Automobile Association of America.