

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5363

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

Title: An act relating to using traffic safety cameras on certain arterial streets.

Brief Description: Adding speed violations on certain arterial streets to the traffic safety camera law.

Sponsors: Senator Jacobsen.

Brief History:

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

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5363 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, Delvin, Jacobsen, Kauffman and Spanel.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Benton, Clements, Holmquist, Pflug and Sheldon.

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.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

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

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

SUMMARY OF BILL (Recommended Substitute): The automated traffic safety camera law is expanded to authorize cities with a population over 500,000 to use cameras for detecting speed violations on city arterial streets.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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: Behavioral mistakes are involved in 80 percent of accidents. Speed is one of the top two behaviors that contribute to accidents and cameras will help address this. The City of Lakewood program has been successful using their traffic camera program. These cameras will make a difference. A Seattle survey favored using red light cameras. Pedestrian safety is a top priority for Seattle and risk of a pedestrian being killed is greatly reduced with a reduction in speed.

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: Steve Lind, Washington Traffic Safety Commission; Amber Lewis, Washington Federation of State Employees; Frank Video, on behalf of Seattle City Councilmember Licata.

OTHER: Dave Overstreet, American Automobile Association.