

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5188

As of January 26, 2011

Title: An act relating to harmonizing certain traffic control signal provisions relative to yellow change intervals and certain fine amount limitations.

Brief Description: Harmonizing certain traffic control signal provisions relative to yellow change intervals and certain fine amount limitations.

Sponsors: Senators Becker, Haugen, Swecker, Stevens, King, Fain, Delvin, Holmquist Newbry, Honeyford and Hewitt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/25/11.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Kelly Simpson (786-7403)

Background: Under current law, local governments may use automated traffic safety cameras to detect stoplight, railroad crossing, or school speed zone violations. Use of the cameras is restricted to two-arterial intersections, railroad crossings, and school speed zones. The cameras may only take pictures of the vehicle and vehicle license plate while an infraction is occurring, and must not reveal the face of the driver or passengers. Infractions detected through the use of the cameras are not part of the registered owner's driving record. Additionally, the infractions must be processed like parking infractions, and the fine issued for the infraction may not exceed the amount of a fine issued for other local parking infractions.

Summary of Bill: All traffic control signals (stoplights) must have yellow light change intervals that are at least as long as the minimum intervals identified in the federal Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

If an automated traffic safety camera is used to detect stoplight violations, it must be installed on a stoplight that has a yellow change interval duration that meets the standards identified in the MUTCD, and the yellow change interval duration may not be reduced after placement of the camera.

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.

The fine issued for a stoplight violation detected through the use of an automated traffic safety camera may not exceed the monetary penalty for a violation of the requirement to follow official traffic control devices (currently \$124).

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: The bill was developed with stakeholder input over the interim. It attempts to bring accountability and transparency to traffic camera programs. It standardizes yellow light durations and would provide consistency, and equity, regarding fine amounts for infractions detected through traffic cameras. Cities don't have budgets to provide police at all intersections. Traffic cameras are an effective non-traditional policing tool.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Becker, prime sponsor; Steve Lind, WA Traffic Safety Commission; Dave Overstreet, AAA of WA; Dean Shirey, Seattle PD; Corey Darlington, Tacoma PD.