

HOUSE BILL REPORT

EHB 1087

As Passed House:
March 2, 2015

Title: An act relating to automated traffic safety cameras in school speed zones.

Brief Description: Concerning automated traffic safety cameras in school speed zones.

Sponsors: Representatives Takko and Gregerson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 1/19/15, 1/26/15 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/2/15, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Requires that school zones in which automated traffic cameras are used to detect speed violations be marked with a sign and flashing beacon.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 25 members: Representatives Clibborn, Chair; Farrell, Vice Chair; Fey, Vice Chair; Moscoso, Vice Chair; Orcutt, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Gregerson, Harmsworth, Hayes, Kochmar, McBride, Moeller, Morris, Ortiz-Self, Pike, Riccelli, Rodne, Sells, Shea, Takko, Tarleton, Wilson, Young and Zeiger.

Staff: Andrew Russell (786-7143).

Background:

State law limits the maximum speed when passing a school zone at 20 miles per hour. This maximum speed limit applies in a zone that extends 300 feet in either direction from a school crosswalk when the area is marked with standard school speed limit signs. In addition, a city or town may establish a zone that extends 300 feet from the border of any school. Traffic infractions for a violation of the maximum speed limit in such a school speed zone are

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doubled, with 50 percent of the associated monetary penalties deposited into the School Zone Safety Account.

School zone speed limits may be enforced through the use of an automated traffic safety camera. An "automated traffic safety camera" is defined in statute as a device that uses a sensor in conjunction with a camera to record a driver's failure to follow certain traffic laws. Generally, before an automated traffic safety camera may be installed, the local jurisdiction must adopt an ordinance allowing for the use of such a camera. In addition, the location where a camera will be installed must be marked at least 30 days prior to the camera's activation, and the camera may only take a picture of the vehicle and only while the violation is occurring. Finally, the pictures produced from an automated traffic safety camera are not open to the public and may not be used in a court proceeding except a proceeding relating to a traffic infraction recorded by the camera.

Summary of Engrossed Bill:

A school speed zone in which an automated traffic safety camera is installed must be marked with a yellow flashing beacon. This beacon must flash only when an automated traffic safety camera is being used, and it may not flash at any other time. Additionally, signage that complies with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices must be placed in these locations. Finally, jurisdictions may consult with the Washington Traffic Safety Commission about such signage.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on September 1, 2015.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) School zones have cameras that catch people, and there is support for that. The people in Longview voted that they wanted to keep school zone cameras. They do a good job of slowing people down, but it would be nice to know when they are activated and when they are not. This is a simple fix, requiring a sign and flashing lights before each camera. They turn the cameras off from time to time—evenings, Christmas break, summertime—so it would be nice to know when they are activated and when they are not. In Longview, the cameras collected \$1.1 million in fines, so it shouldn't be too much of a burden to put them in.

(Opposed) Prior legislation made our state's traffic camera signage uniform with the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices so there are no one-off signs across the state. The use of a beacon with the signage makes sense as a good way to advise drivers to slow down. Rather than mandating beacons through legislation, the vendor should follow the best management practices.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Takko, prime sponsor.

(Opposed) Bill Stauffacher, American Traffic Solutions.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.