

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5336

As of January 27, 2015

Title: An act relating to limiting the use of automated traffic safety cameras to detect speed violations not in school zones to certain cities authorized by the Washington state legislature as a pilot project for at least one full year prior to January 1, 2015.

Brief Description: Limiting the use of automated traffic safety cameras to detect speed violations not in school zones to certain cities.

Sponsors: Senators Miloscia, Darneille, Angel, Conway, King, Hobbs, Warnick and Chase.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/26/15.

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's license plate while an infraction is occurring, and must not reveal the face of the driver or passengers. Infractions detected through the use of cameras are not part of the registered owner's driving record.

During the 2011-13 and 2013-15 fiscal biennia, the state transportation budget authorized pilot projects, administered by the Washington Traffic Safety Commission, regarding the use of automated traffic safety cameras to detect speed violations outside of school speed zones. The pilot projects were limited to western Washington cities with a population over 195,000 which resulted in pilots in both Seattle and Tacoma. Additionally only one speed-detection camera per jurisdiction was permitted under the pilot projects.

Infractions generated by the use of automated traffic safety cameras are processed in the same manner as parking infractions. The fine issued for an infraction that is detected through the use of an automated traffic safety camera may not exceed the amount of a fine issued for other parking infractions within the jurisdiction.

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.

Summary of Bill: Any city in western Washington with a population over 195,000 may operate one automated traffic safety camera to detect speed violations, but only if the use and location of the camera was authorized by the Legislature as a pilot project for at least one full year prior to January 1, 2015.

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: Evidence shows that the speed cameras work in reducing accidents in certain locations. The technology works and enhances traffic safety and improves society. The use of the cameras was previously authorized as pilot projects. Passage of this bill would mean there would no longer be a need to come back to the Legislature to continually reauthorize the program. Both citations and accidents have been greatly reduced where the cameras are located. The cameras are a safe and effective tool.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Miloscia, prime sponsor; Marty Campbell, Tacoma City Council; Shawn Stringer, Tacoma Police Dept.