
Public Safety Committee

HB 2735

Brief Description: Allowing limited authority officers to issue infractions for violations detected through automated traffic safety and school bus safety cameras.

Sponsors: Representatives Springer, Walen, Slatter, Fitzgibbon, Kloba and Pollet.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authorizes limited authority peace officers to issue infractions for traffic violations detected through automated traffic safety and school bus safety cameras, so long as those officers are authorized to do so by the local law enforcement agency.

Hearing Date: 1/27/20

Staff: Kelly Leonard (786-7147).

Background:

Automated Traffic and School Bus Safety Cameras.

State law provides restrictions on the use of automated traffic safety cameras by local governments. Generally, automated traffic safety cameras may only be used for the purpose of detecting stoplight, railroad crossing, or school speed zone violations. Certain cities participating in state-authorized pilot projects may also use traffic safety cameras to detect other speed violations.

Before installing and using automatic traffic safety cameras, a local government must adopt an ordinance meeting certain requirements. A location with an automated traffic safety camera must be clearly marked, indicating to a driver that he or she is entering a zone where traffic laws are enforced with a camera. Automated traffic safety cameras may only take pictures of the vehicle and vehicle license plate while an infraction is occurring, and may not reveal the face of the driver or passengers.

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.

In addition, school districts may install and operate automated school bus safety cameras on school buses to detect vehicles failing to stop for school buses. However, the use of the cameras must be approved by the school district board of directors. Automated school bus safety cameras are subject to the same restrictions as automated traffic safety cameras.

Infractions detected through the use of automated traffic or school bus safety cameras are not part of the registered owner's driving record. Infractions must be mailed to the registered owner of the vehicle within 14 days, processed like parking infractions, and any fines issued for infractions may not exceed the amount of fines issued for other local parking infractions.

Peace Officers.

Law enforcement officers are authorized to issue infractions for violations of the traffic code.

Under state law, a "general authority peace officer" means any full-time, fully compensated and elected, appointed, or employed officer of a general authority law enforcement agency who is commissioned to enforce state criminal laws. "General authority law enforcement agency" means any agency, department, or division, subdivision, or other unit of state or local government, having as its primary function the detection and apprehension of persons committing infractions or violating the traffic or criminal laws in general.

"Limited authority peace officer" means any full-time, fully compensated officer of a limited authority law enforcement agency empowered by that agency to detect or apprehend violators of the laws in some or all of the limited subject areas for which that agency is responsible. A limited authority peace officer may be a specially commissioned peace officer. "Limited authority law enforcement agency" means any agency, political subdivision, or unit of state or government, having as one of its functions the apprehension or detection of persons committing infractions or violating the traffic or criminal laws relating to limited subject areas.

Summary of Bill:

When authorized by the local law enforcement agency with the authority to conduct traffic enforcement in the respective jurisdiction, a limited authority peace officer has the authority to issue an infraction for a violation detected through the use of an automated traffic or school bus safety camera.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 24, 2020.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.