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**HOUSE BILL 1229**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2019 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Caldier, Kilduff, Klippert, Pettigrew, Appleton, and Santos

AN ACT Relating to photographs, microphotographs, and electronic images from traffic safety cameras and toll systems; and amending RCW 46.63.170 and 46.63.160.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 46.63.170 and 2015 3rd sp.s. c 44 s 406 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The use of automated traffic safety cameras for issuance of notices of infraction is subject to the following requirements:

(a) The appropriate local legislative authority must prepare an analysis of the locations within the jurisdiction where automated traffic safety cameras are proposed to be located: (i) Before enacting an ordinance allowing for the initial use of automated traffic safety cameras; and (ii) before adding additional cameras or relocating any existing camera to a new location within the jurisdiction. Automated traffic safety cameras may be used to detect one or more of the following: Stoplight, railroad crossing, or school speed zone violations; or speed violations subject to (c) of this subsection. At a minimum, the local ordinance must contain the restrictions described in this section and provisions for public notice and signage. Cities and counties using automated traffic safety cameras before July 24, 2005, are subject to the restrictions described in this section, but are not required to enact an authorizing ordinance. Beginning one year after June 7, 2012, cities and counties using automated traffic safety cameras must post an annual report of the number of traffic accidents that occurred at each location where an automated traffic safety camera is located as well as the number of notices of infraction issued for each camera and any other relevant information about the automated traffic safety cameras that the city or county deems appropriate on the city's or county's web site.

(b) Except as provided in (c) of this subsection, use of automated traffic safety cameras is restricted to the following locations only: (i) Intersections of two arterials with traffic control signals that have yellow change interval durations in accordance with RCW 47.36.022, which interval durations may not be reduced after placement of the camera; (ii) railroad crossings; and (iii) school speed zones.

(c) Any city west of the Cascade mountains with a population of more than one hundred ninety-five thousand located in a county with a population of fewer than one million five hundred thousand may operate an automated traffic safety camera to detect speed violations subject to the following limitations:

(i) A city may only operate one such automated traffic safety camera within its respective jurisdiction; and

(ii) The use and location of the automated traffic safety camera must have first been authorized by the Washington state legislature as a pilot project for at least one full year.

(d) Automated traffic safety cameras may only take pictures of the vehicle and vehicle license plate and only while an infraction is occurring. The picture must not reveal the face of the driver or of passengers in the vehicle. The primary purpose of camera placement is to take pictures of the vehicle and vehicle license plate when an infraction is occurring. Cities and counties shall consider installing cameras in a manner that minimizes the impact of camera flash on drivers.

(e) A notice of infraction must be mailed to the registered owner of the vehicle within fourteen days of the violation, or to the renter of a vehicle within fourteen days of establishing the renter's name and address under subsection (3)(a) of this section. The law enforcement officer issuing the notice of infraction shall include with it a certificate or facsimile thereof, based upon inspection of photographs, microphotographs, or electronic images produced by an automated traffic safety camera, stating the facts supporting the notice of infraction. This certificate or facsimile is prima facie evidence of the facts contained in it and is admissible in a proceeding charging a violation under this chapter. The photographs, microphotographs, or electronic images evidencing the violation must be available for inspection and admission into evidence in a proceeding to adjudicate the liability for the infraction. A person receiving a notice of infraction based on evidence detected by an automated traffic safety camera may respond to the notice by mail.

(f) The registered owner of a vehicle is responsible for an infraction under RCW 46.63.030(1)(d) unless the registered owner overcomes the presumption in RCW 46.63.075, or, in the case of a rental car business, satisfies the conditions under subsection (3) of this section. If appropriate under the circumstances, a renter identified under subsection (3)(a) of this section is responsible for an infraction.

(g) ((~~Notwithstanding any other provision of law,~~)) All photographs, microphotographs, or electronic images prepared under this section are for the exclusive use of law enforcement in the discharge of duties under this section ((~~and~~)) or are available for the investigation and prosecution of crimes pursuant to a lawfully issued search warrant. All such photographs, microphotographs, and electronic images are not open to the public ((~~and may not be used in a court in a pending action or proceeding unless the action or proceeding relates to a violation under this section. No photograph, microphotograph, or electronic image may be used for any purpose other than enforcement of violations under this section nor retained longer than necessary to enforce this section~~)).

(h) All locations where an automated traffic safety camera is used must be clearly marked at least thirty days prior to activation of the camera by placing signs in locations that clearly indicate to a driver that he or she is entering a zone where traffic laws are enforced by an automated traffic safety camera. Signs placed in automated traffic safety camera locations after June 7, 2012, must follow the specifications and guidelines under the manual of uniform traffic control devices for streets and highways as adopted by the department of transportation under chapter 47.36 RCW.

(i) If a county or city has established an authorized automated traffic safety camera program under this section, the compensation paid to the manufacturer or vendor of the equipment used must be based only upon the value of the equipment and services provided or rendered in support of the system, and may not be based upon a portion of the fine or civil penalty imposed or the revenue generated by the equipment.

(2) Infractions detected through the use of automated traffic safety cameras are not part of the registered owner's driving record under RCW 46.52.101 and 46.52.120. Additionally, infractions generated by the use of automated traffic safety cameras under this section shall be processed in the same manner as parking infractions, including for the purposes of RCW 3.50.100, 35.20.220, 46.16A.120, and 46.20.270(2). The amount of the fine issued for an infraction generated through the use of an automated traffic safety camera shall not exceed the amount of a fine issued for other parking infractions within the jurisdiction. However, the amount of the fine issued for a traffic control signal violation detected through the use of an automated traffic safety camera shall not exceed the monetary penalty for a violation of RCW 46.61.050 as provided under RCW 46.63.110, including all applicable statutory assessments.

(3) If the registered owner of the vehicle is a rental car business, the law enforcement agency shall, before a notice of infraction being issued under this section, provide a written notice to the rental car business that a notice of infraction may be issued to the rental car business if the rental car business does not, within eighteen days of receiving the written notice, provide to the issuing agency by return mail:

(a) A statement under oath stating the name and known mailing address of the individual driving or renting the vehicle when the infraction occurred; or

(b) A statement under oath that the business is unable to determine who was driving or renting the vehicle at the time the infraction occurred because the vehicle was stolen at the time of the infraction. A statement provided under this subsection must be accompanied by a copy of a filed police report regarding the vehicle theft; or

(c) In lieu of identifying the vehicle operator, the rental car business may pay the applicable penalty.

Timely mailing of this statement to the issuing law enforcement agency relieves a rental car business of any liability under this chapter for the notice of infraction.

(4) Nothing in this section prohibits a law enforcement officer from issuing a notice of traffic infraction to a person in control of a vehicle at the time a violation occurs under RCW 46.63.030(1) (a), (b), or (c).

(5) For the purposes of this section, "automated traffic safety camera" means a device that uses a vehicle sensor installed to work in conjunction with an intersection traffic control system, a railroad grade crossing control system, or a speed measuring device, and a camera synchronized to automatically record one or more sequenced photographs, microphotographs, or electronic images of the rear of a motor vehicle at the time the vehicle fails to stop when facing a steady red traffic control signal or an activated railroad grade crossing control signal, or exceeds a speed limit as detected by a speed measuring device.

(6) During the 2011-2013 and 2013-2015 fiscal biennia, this section does not apply to automated traffic safety cameras for the purposes of section 216(5), chapter 367, Laws of 2011 and section 216(6), chapter 306, Laws of 2013.

**Sec.**  RCW 46.63.160 and 2015 c 292 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) This section applies only to civil penalties for nonpayment of tolls detected through use of photo toll systems.

(2) Nothing in this section prohibits a law enforcement officer from issuing a notice of traffic infraction to a person in control of a vehicle at the time a violation occurs under RCW 46.63.030(1) (a), (b), or (c).

(3) A notice of civil penalty may be issued by the department of transportation when a toll is assessed through use of a photo toll system and the toll is not paid by the toll payment due date, which is eighty days from the date the vehicle uses the toll facility and incurs the toll charge.

(4) Any registered owner or renter of a vehicle traveling upon a toll facility operated under chapter 47.56 or 47.46 RCW is subject to a civil penalty governed by the administrative procedures set forth in this section when the vehicle incurs a toll charge and the toll is not paid by the toll payment due date, which is eighty days from the date the vehicle uses the toll facility and incurs the toll charge.

(5)(a) The department shall develop rules to allow an individual who has been issued a notice of civil penalty to present evidence of mitigating circumstances as to why a toll bill was not timely paid. If an individual is able to present verifiable evidence to the department that a civil penalty was incurred due to hospitalization, military deployment, eviction, homelessness, death of the alleged violator or of an alleged violator's immediate family member, failure to receive the toll bill due to an incorrect address that has since been corrected, a prepaid electronic toll account error that has since been corrected, an error made by the department or an agent of the department, or other mitigating circumstances as determined by the department, the department may dismiss or reduce the civil penalty and associated fees.

(b)(i) Consistent with chapter 34.05 RCW, the department of transportation shall develop an administrative adjudication process to review appeals of civil penalties issued by the department of transportation for toll nonpayment detected through the use of a photo toll system under this section. The department of transportation shall submit to the transportation committees of the legislature an annual report on the number of times adjudicators reduce or dismiss the civil penalty as provided in (b)(ii) of this subsection and the total amount of the civil penalties dismissed. The report must be submitted by December 1st of each year.

(ii) During the adjudication process, the alleged violator must have an opportunity to explain mitigating circumstances as to why the toll bill was not timely paid. Hospitalization, a divorce decree or legal separation agreement resulting in a transfer of the vehicle, an active duty member of the military or national guard covered by the federal service members civil relief act, 50 U.S.C. Sec. 501 et seq., or state service members' civil relief act, chapter 38.42 RCW, eviction, homelessness, the death of the alleged violator or of an immediate family member, being switched to a different method of toll payment, if the alleged violator did not receive a toll charge bill or notice of civil penalty, or other mitigating circumstances as determined by the adjudicator are deemed valid mitigating circumstances. All of the reasons that constitute mitigating circumstances must have occurred within a reasonable time of the alleged toll violation. In response to these circumstances, the adjudicator may reduce or dismiss the civil penalty and associated administrative fees.

(6) The use of a photo toll system is subject to the following requirements:

(a) Photo toll systems may take photographs, digital photographs, microphotographs, videotapes, or other recorded images of the vehicle and vehicle license plate only.

(b) A notice of civil penalty must include with it a certificate or facsimile thereof, based upon inspection of photographs, microphotographs, videotape, or other recorded images produced by a photo toll system, stating the facts supporting the notice of civil penalty. This certificate or facsimile is prima facie evidence of the facts contained in it and is admissible in a proceeding established under subsection (5) of this section. The photographs, digital photographs, microphotographs, videotape, or other recorded images evidencing the toll nonpayment civil penalty must be available for inspection and admission into evidence in a proceeding to adjudicate the liability for the civil penalty.

(c)(i) By June 30, 2016, prior to issuing a notice of civil penalty to a registered owner of a vehicle listed on an active prepaid electronic toll account, the department of transportation must:

(A) Send an ((~~electronic mail~~)) email notice to the email address provided in the prepaid electronic toll account of unpaid pay-by-mail toll bills at least ten days prior to a notice of civil penalty being issued for the associated pay-by-mail toll. The notice must be separate from any regular notice sent by the department; and

(B) Call the phone numbers provided in the account to provide notice of unpaid pay-by-mail toll bills at least ten days prior to a notice of civil penalty being issued for the associated pay-by-mail toll.

(ii) The department is relieved of its obligation to provide notice as required by this section if the customer has declined to receive communications from the department through such methods.

(d) ((~~Notwithstanding any other provision of law,~~)) All photographs, digital photographs, microphotographs, videotape, other recorded images, or other records identifying a specific instance of travel prepared under this section are for the exclusive use of the tolling agency for toll collection and enforcement purposes ((~~and~~)) or are available for the investigation and prosecution of crimes pursuant to a lawfully issued search warrant. All such photographs, digital photographs, microphotographs, videotapes, recorded images, and other records are not open to the public ((~~and may not be used in a court in a pending action or proceeding unless the action or proceeding relates to a civil penalty under this section. No photograph, digital photograph, microphotograph, videotape, other recorded image, or other record identifying a specific instance of travel may be used for any purpose other than toll collection or enforcement of civil penalties under this section~~)). Records identifying a specific instance of travel by a specific person or vehicle must be retained only as required to ensure payment and enforcement of tolls and to comply with state records retention policies.

(e) All locations where a photo toll system is used must be clearly marked by placing signs in locations that clearly indicate to a driver that he or she is entering a zone where tolls are assessed and enforced by a photo toll system.

(f) Within existing resources, the department of transportation shall conduct education and outreach efforts at least six months prior to activating an all-electronic photo toll system. Methods of outreach shall include a department presence at community meetings in the vicinity of a toll facility, signage, and information published in local media. Information provided shall include notice of when all electronic photo tolling shall begin and methods of payment. Additionally, the department shall provide quarterly reporting on education and outreach efforts and other data related to the issuance of civil penalties.

(g) The envelope containing a toll charge bill or related notice issued pursuant to RCW 47.46.105 or 47.56.795, or a notice of civil penalty issued under this section, must prominently indicate that the contents are time sensitive and related to a toll violation.

(7) Civil penalties for toll nonpayment detected through the use of photo toll systems must be issued to the registered owner of the vehicle identified by the photo toll system, but are not part of the registered owner's driving record under RCW 46.52.101 and 46.52.120.

(8) The civil penalty for toll nonpayment detected through the use of a photo toll system is forty dollars plus the photo toll and associated fees.

(9) Except as provided otherwise in this subsection, all civil penalties, including the photo toll and associated fees, collected under this section must be deposited into the toll facility account of the facility on which the toll was assessed. However, through June 30, 2013, civil penalties deposited into the Tacoma Narrows toll bridge account created under RCW 47.56.165 that are in excess of amounts necessary to support the toll adjudication process applicable to toll collection on the Tacoma Narrows bridge must first be allocated toward repayment of operating loans and reserve payments provided to the account from the motor vehicle account under section 1005(15), chapter 518, Laws of 2007. Additionally, all civil penalties, resulting from nonpayment of tolls on the state route number 520 corridor, shall be deposited into the state route number 520 civil penalties account created under section 4, chapter 248, Laws of 2010 but only if chapter 248, Laws of 2010 is enacted by June 30, 2010.

(10) If the registered owner of the vehicle is a rental car business, the department of transportation shall, before a toll bill is issued, provide a written notice to the rental car business that a toll bill may be issued to the rental car business if the rental car business does not, within thirty days of the mailing of the written notice, provide to the issuing agency by return mail:

(a) A statement under oath stating the name and known mailing address of the individual driving or renting the vehicle when the toll was assessed; or

(b) A statement under oath that the business is unable to determine who was driving or renting the vehicle at the time the toll was assessed because the vehicle was stolen at the time the toll was assessed. A statement provided under this subsection must be accompanied by a copy of a filed police report regarding the vehicle theft; or

(c) In lieu of identifying the vehicle operator, the rental car business may pay the applicable toll and fee.

Timely mailing of this statement to the issuing agency relieves a rental car business of any liability under this section for the payment of the toll.

(11) It is the intent of the legislature that the department provide an educational opportunity when vehicle owners incur fees and penalties associated with late payment of tolls for the first time. As part of this educational opportunity, the department may waive penalties and fees if the issue that resulted in the toll not being timely paid has been resolved and the vehicle owner establishes an electronic toll account, if practicable. To aid in collecting tolls in a timely manner, the department may waive or reduce the outstanding amounts of fees and penalties assessed when tolls are not timely paid.

(12)(a) By June 30, 2016, the department of transportation must update its web site, and accommodate access to the web site from mobile platforms, to allow toll customers to efficiently manage all their tolling accounts, regardless of method of payment.

(b)(i) By June 30, 2016, the department of transportation must make available to the public a point of access that allows a third party to develop an application for mobile technologies that (A) securely accesses a user's toll account information and (B) allows the user to manage his or her toll account to the same extent possible through the department's web site.

(ii) If the department determines that it would be cost-effective and in the best interests of the citizens of Washington, it may also develop an application for mobile technologies that allows toll customers to manage all of their tolling accounts from a mobile platform.

(13) When acquiring a new photo toll system, the department of transportation must enable the new system to:

(a) Connect with the department of licensing's vehicle record system so that a prepaid electronic toll account can be updated automatically when a toll customer's vehicle record is updated, if the customer has consented to such updates; and

(b) Document when any toll is assessed for a vehicle listed in a prepaid electronic toll account in the monthly statement that is made available to the electronic toll account holder regardless of whether the method of payment for the toll is via pay-by-mail or prepaid electronic toll account.

(14) Consistent with chapter 34.05 RCW, the department of transportation shall develop rules to implement this section.

(15) For the purposes of this section:

(a) "Photo toll system" means the system defined in RCW 47.56.010 and 47.46.020.

(b) "Prepaid electronic toll account" means a prepaid toll account linked to a pass or license plate number, including "Good to Go!".

(16) If a customer's toll charge or civil penalty is waived pursuant to this section due to an error made by the department, or an agent of the department, in reading the customer's license plate, the secretary of transportation must send a letter to the customer apologizing for the error.

**--- END ---**