
Transportation Committee

HB 1793

Brief Description: Establishing additional uses for automated traffic safety cameras for traffic congestion reduction and increased safety.

Sponsors: Representatives Fitzgibbon, Pettigrew, Macri, Valdez, Fey, Cody, Senn, Springer, Pollet and Tarleton.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands authorization for the use of automated traffic safety cameras for the following violations: Stopping When Traffic Obstructed; Stopping at Intersection or Crosswalk; public transportation only lane; and stopping, standing, and parking at locations restricted for emergency response vehicle entry or exit or the boarding or disembarking of public transportation vehicles, including public ferries.
- Expands locations where automated traffic safety cameras are permitted to include midblock on arterial roadways.

Hearing Date: 2/18/19

Staff: Jennifer Harris (786-7143).

Background:

Authorized Uses and Requirements for Automated Traffic Safety Cameras.

The use of automated traffic safety cameras is permitted at red light intersections that meet minimum yellow change interval requirements, at railroad crossings, and in school speed zones, if the following criteria are met:

1. The local legislative authority with jurisdiction where the cameras are to be located prepares an analysis of the locations within the jurisdiction where automated traffic safety cameras are proposed to be located before enacting an ordinance authorizing their use and before adding additional cameras or relocating any existing 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.

2. An ordinance is enacted in cities and counties with automated traffic safety cameras installed on or after July 24, 2005, that includes the restrictions required by state law and provisions for public notice and signage.
3. The location where the camera has been installed is clearly marked at least 30 days prior to activation of the camera through the placement of signs at that location that follow federal guidelines as adopted by the Washington State Department of Transportation.
4. Cities and counties using traffic safety cameras post an annual report on their websites that includes the number of traffic collisions that occurred at each location with a camera, the number of notices of traffic infractions issued for each camera, and any other relevant information.

The use of automated traffic safety cameras to detect speed violations is highly restricted (with the exception of cameras in school speed zones), and must meet the following criteria:

1. be located in a city west of the Cascade mountains with a population greater than 195,000, within a county with a population of fewer than 1.5 million;
2. be the only such camera located in a city that meets the above criteria; and
3. have been authorized by the Legislature as a pilot project for at least one full year.

Currently, only one such camera has met these requirements, and it is located in the City of Tacoma.

With the exception of the camera located in the City of Tacoma, automated traffic safety cameras may only be located:

- at intersections of two arterials with traffic control signals that meet state yellow change interval duration requirements;
- at railroad crossings; and
- in school speed zones.

Restrictions on the Use of Automated Traffic Safety Cameras.

Automated traffic safety cameras may only take pictures of the vehicle and vehicle license plate while an infraction is occurring, and the pictures taken must not reveal the face of the driver or passengers in the vehicle. Photos and electronic images captured by a camera may only be used for the enforcement of traffic infractions for which their use has been authorized, and may not be retained longer than would be necessary for these enforcement purposes. Photos and electronic images are not available to the public and may not be used in a court in a pending action or proceeding unless that action or proceeding relates to a traffic infraction for which their use has been authorized.

Automated Traffic Safety Camera-Captured Infractions.

A notice of traffic infraction must be mailed to the registered owner of the vehicle within 14 days of the violation (or to its renter within 14 days of his or her name and address being established). The law enforcement officer issuing the notice must include a certificate or copy of a certificate stating the facts supporting the notice, which serves as prima facie evidence of the facts contained in it. The photographs or electronic images that serve as evidence of the violation must be available for inspection and admission into evidence in a proceeding on the infraction.

The infraction is not part of the registered owner's driving record and must be processed in the same manner as parking infractions. The infraction may not exceed the fine amount for other parking infractions in a jurisdiction in which it has occurred, and also may not exceed the monetary penalty for failure to obey a traffic control device (currently \$136), as set by rule by the Washington State Supreme Court.

The registered owner of a vehicle is held responsible for the infraction unless he or she states under oath in a written statement to the court or in testimony before the court that the vehicle was stolen or in the care, custody, or control of some other person at the time of the infraction.

Summary of Bill:

Authorization for the use of automated traffic safety cameras is expanded for the following violations:

- Stopping When Traffic Obstructed;
- Stopping at Intersection or Crosswalk;
- public transportation only lane;
- stopping, standing, and parking at locations restricted for emergency response vehicle entry or exit or the boarding or disembarking of public transportation vehicles, including public ferries.

The same criteria must be met for a local jurisdiction to use automated traffic safety cameras for these violations as are currently required for their use for other violations.

Location types where automated traffic safety cameras are permitted are expanded to include midblock on arterial highways. "Arterial highway" means every public highway, or portion of a highway, designated as an arterial highway. Roadway classifications other than arterial highways include major collectors, minor collectors, and local roadways.

For the purposes of this law, "public transportation vehicle" is defined as any motor vehicle, streetcar, train, trolley vehicle, ferry boat, or any other device, vessel, or vehicle that is owned or operated by a transit authority or an entity providing service on behalf of a transit authority that is used for the purpose of carrying passengers and that operates on established routes.

"Transit authority" means a city transit system, a county transportation authority, a metropolitan municipal corporation transit system, a public transportation benefit area, an unincorporated transportation benefit area, a regional transportation authority, or any special purpose district formed to operate a public transportation system.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 11, 2019.

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