

Pennsylvania State Police Testimony

Joint Committee Hearing – Senate and House Transportation Committees

Speed Enforcement Cameras in Work Zones

July 14, 2015



Good morning Chairmen and members of the committee. I am Lieutenant Robert Krol of the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) Legislative Affairs Office. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss improving work zone safety through the use of speed enforcement cameras.

Improving the quality of life for the residents and guests of Pennsylvania by prioritizing highway safety is one of the highest goals of the PSP. In working toward this goal, the PSP employs multiple crash-reduction strategies which are developed through a variety of methods, including the monitoring and evaluation of crash-related data and by working in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), along with other state, federal, and private entities involved in the transportation sector.

One very important aspect of improving highway safety is ensuring the safe operation of vehicles by drivers traveling through designated work zones. These areas, including the segments immediately before and after the designated work zone, can present a host of hazards to the highway workers and the motoring public. Depending on the particular work zone, hazards may include stopped traffic queues upon approach to the area, rough and uneven road surfaces, significantly reduced lane widths, and most notably the presence of highway workers. Throughout these zones, the men and women who build and maintain our roads and bridges are extremely vulnerable to the actions of unsafe drivers.

Ensuring compliance with the posted speed limits on our highways is a very important component in the effort to reduce traffic crashes. Based on information provided by PennDOT, during 2014, there were 121,317 reportable traffic crashes, of which excessive speed was a factor in 32,069. The fact that 26%, just over one-fourth of all reported crashes in 2014, involved excessive speed clearly indicates a need for the Commonwealth's police agencies to continue making speed enforcement a central component of their overall crash-reduction strategy. This is especially important within the highway work zones, as the extra hazards in these areas can be greatly amplified by a motorist exceeding the established work zone speed limit.

The concept of using automated speed enforcement cameras in work zones, as outlined in SB 840, may potentially assist in reducing the number of drivers exceeding the speed limit. This bill is structured as a five-year pilot program for work zones established on interstate highways under the jurisdiction of PennDOT and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission. The PSP believes the decision of whether or not to implement the use of this technology is a policy matter that should take into account topics such as the costs to operate it, requirements on personnel resources, expected success rates, and public perception. We look forward to being involved in those discussions during any future workgroups regarding this subject.

Once again, I would like to thank the committee for inviting the PSP here to speak on this matter. I will now be happy to take any questions you may have.