

# SB 14-181



BUILDING A STRONG PARTNERSHIP WITH COLORADO'S CITIES AND TOWNS

## RED LIGHT/PHOTO RADAR PROHIBIT AUTOMATIC CAMERA TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT

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### YOUR "NO" VOTE RESPECTFULLY REQUESTED

SB 14-181 prohibits the use of automated vehicle identification systems by law enforcement. Commonly known as "red light camera" and "photo speed radar" these law enforcement tools use automated systems to record violations of speed limits and traffic signal compliance.

**The only goal of this tool is to gain motorist compliance with the law.** Speed limits are meant to be observed and red light signals obeyed whether or not a police car is present.

While it is obvious, lost in this discussion is the fact that **motorists observing traffic laws never receive a citation.**

Use of this law enforcement tool is controlled in each municipality by city council. These elected officials are responsive to community opinion and local safety concerns. Councils have weighed these factors with some cities discontinuing the use of this tool.

The use of photo speed radar enforcement is already strictly limited to residential streets, school zones and construction zones. It can be used only where the speed limit is not more than 35 miles per hour. A violator must be exceeding the speed limit by at least 10 miles per hour to receive a ticket. Photo speed radar vans are manned by qualified personnel. Red light cameras are deployed at selected high risk intersections. Fines are limited to a maximum \$40 for speeding and \$75 for red light infractions. No points are assessed against a driver's record.

Examples of improved safety:

- At its only red light camera intersection, Commerce City has recorded a 41 percent decrease in accidents in the last 12 month reporting period.
- Boulder has eight red light camera intersections. During the life of the red light program the number of violations per day has decreased from 174 to 49, a 72 percent decrease. The number of intersection accidents has decreased 68 percent.
- The monthly number of red light violations per day in Littleton is down 75 percent during the life of the program with only five percent of citations issued to repeat offenders.

**The use of this law enforcement tool is being handled the way it should be — by the elected officials of each municipality.** They know the safety concerns of neighborhoods.

April 22, 2014

Honorable Members of the Colorado General Assembly:

**Your “NO” vote on SB 14-181 respectfully requested**

At a time when we have deepening concerns over hit and run drivers, impaired drivers, and traffic calming in neighborhoods, it makes no sense to eliminate a law enforcement tool that has increased traffic law compliance and reduced accidents. Safe streets are of vital importance to us as mayors and we are asking that you vote “no” on SB 14-181 that eliminates our use of red light camera and photo speed radar.

The use of this tool has allowed police departments to extend their effectiveness without adding additional personnel. Reducing the ability to enforce red light and speeding laws sends the wrong message to the public.

It’s important to know that this tool is used in a very limited manner as required by current statute. A photo radar van can operate only in school zones, construction zones, and on residential neighborhood streets posted at 35 miles per hour or less. Violators must be traveling at least ten miles over the speed limit to receive a citation. A sign is always posted at least 300 feet ahead of the van location warning drivers that photo speed radar is in use immediately ahead. Red light cameras are used only in select intersections where violations are a particular safety concern. Signs are posted ahead of those intersections warning motorists red light camera is in use ahead.

The increase in safety is impressive. Some red light camera and photo speed radar safety statistics:

- Fort Collins: Harmony at Timberline intersection recorded 468 red light violations within a 12 hour period when camera installed. Now 160 violations PER MONTH.
- Fort Collins: Before use of photo speed radar city-wide, a speed limit compliance survey found only 19% compliance. That figure is now 60% compliance.
- Commerce City: U.S. 85 and 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection recorded a 41 percent decrease in accidents from 2012 to 2013. For the three years this camera has been in operation the number of citations decreased from 8,637 the first year to 5,457 the third year.
- Boulder: Intersections with red light cameras together have seen a 68% decrease in accidents since installation and a 72% decrease in violations.
- Littleton: Since program began a 75% decrease in violations. Driver’s behavior has changed as only 5% of citations are repeat offenders.

- Denver: At the intersection with the highest number of crashes before installation of cameras, the program has reduced injury accidents by 60%; side impact accidents by 62%; total accidents by 38%.
- Sheridan: Speeding citations from photo radar reduced from 15,856 in the first year of the program (2011) to 10,009 in 2013. Drivers are slowing down.

The only goal of this tool is to gain motorist compliance with the law. Speed limits are meant to be observed and red light signals obeyed whether or not there is a police car present. The use of this effective law enforcement tool is being handled the way it should be - by the elected officials of a municipality. They know the safety concerns of their neighborhoods.

Your "no" vote on SB 14-181 is respectfully requested.

Sincerely,



Mayor Michael Hancock, Denver



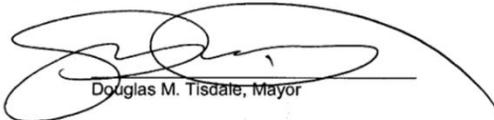
Mayor Karen Weitkunat, Fort Collins



Mayor Sean Ford, Commerce City



Mayor Matt Appelbaum, Boulder

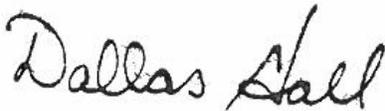


Douglas M. Tisdale, Mayor

Mayor Doug Tisdale, Cherry Hills Village



Mayor Phil Cemanec, Littleton



Mayor Dallas Hall, Sheridan



Mayor Steve Hogan, Aurora



Mayor Ron Rakowsky, Greenwood Village