

SB 559 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Joint Committee On Transportation

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Meeting Dates: 3/18

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Allows all cities to operate fixed photo radar systems in high crash corridors. Removes sunset on authority to operate fixed photo radar on high crash corridors.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Revises definition of "high crash corridor" to mean a segment of highway identified by the Department of Transportation as a safety priority, identified as a priority for safety measures by a transportation safety plan adopted by a city's governing body, or a school zone.

BACKGROUND:

In 2015, House Bill 2621 authorized the City of Portland to operate fixed photo radar systems in urban high crash corridors. Fixed photo radar systems can only be used on designated highways with proper signs signaling that a fixed photo radar unit is being operated. The purpose of fixed photo radar systems is to detect speeding violations and record information about the vehicle without needing a police officer to operate the device. Urban high crash corridors are defined as highways where traffic crashes resulting in fatalities or serious injuries occur at a rate 25 percent higher than other highways with the same speed limit.

The City of Portland currently operates fixed photo radar systems at eight locations: SW Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway (both directions); SE Division Street (both directions); SE 122nd Avenue (both directions); and NE Marine Drive (both directions). If a driver is identified as exceeding the posted speed by more than 10 miles per hour, they receive a ticket in the mail after the image and video of the speed violation has been reviewed and verified by a police officer. The City of Portland reported a reduction in both speeding and top-end speeding following implementation of the program.

A report by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) stated that fixed speed camera enforcement at three different study locations reduced crash injuries by 20-25 percent. NHTSA states that high risk driving behavior, such as excessive speeding and aggressive driving, have been the leading causes of crash fatalities and injuries.

Senate Bill 559 allows all cities to operate photo radar systems at their own cost.