



Ohio Legislative Service Commission

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Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

Bill: S.B. 342 of the 130th G.A. **Date:** November 19, 2014
Status: As Reported by Senate State Government Oversight & Reform **Sponsor:** Sen. Seitz

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: Yes

Contents: Traffic law photo-monitoring devices

State Fiscal Highlights

- No direct fiscal effect on the state.

Local Fiscal Highlights

- If new officers are hired and posted at each of the approximately 250 traffic law photo-monitoring devices currently in use, then staffing these devices 24/7 will cost about \$73.0 million statewide per year. Given this cost, municipalities may decrease their use of the devices to a level supported by existing manpower.
- If municipalities choose to decrease or eliminate their use of the devices, they will see a reduction in fine revenue generated. Approximately \$12.0 million to \$15.0 million per year in fine revenue is currently being generated statewide.

Detailed Fiscal Analysis

Stationing an officer at each device

The bill establishes several conditions for the use of traffic law photo-monitoring devices by local authorities to detect certain traffic law violations.¹ Most significantly, the bill requires a law enforcement officer to be present at the site of the device at all times during its operation.

According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety and various media reports, there are approximately 250 traffic law photo-monitoring devices being used by at least 14 municipalities in Ohio. The bill's requirement that a law enforcement officer be present at the site of a device may have a significant fiscal impact on these municipalities. Operating the devices for 24 hours per day and seven days per week will require at least four officers for each device – a total of approximately 1,000 officers for all 250 devices statewide. If these jurisdictions hire 1,000 new officers to be posted at each device location, and the average annual salary and benefits of a police patrol officer in Ohio is about \$73,000, then the maximum annual cost of stationing an officer at each device is approximately \$73.0 million (1,000 officers x \$73,000 per officer).

In Ohio, red-light violations range in fines from roughly \$100 to \$200 per offense. Since municipalities tend to utilize private vendors to provide the equipment used to enforce the violations, the vendors receive a percentage of the fine revenue, ranging from 30% to 60% of the ticket value. Factoring in the \$73,000 per year an officer receives, between one and four citations will need to be issued per camera location in order to off-set cost of stationing an officer at a given traffic camera location per shift. If a camera location is to be staffed for a 24-hour period, between four and 16 citations will need to be issued to completely off-set the cost of stationing an officer at any given location.²

It is also possible that municipalities will find that hiring 1,000 new officers to continuously operate the current number of devices under the bill's requirement is cost prohibitive, and, instead, will decrease the use of the devices to a level at which they can utilize existing manpower. For example, a municipality may operate fewer devices or only operate them at peak traffic times at locations yielding the greatest revenue.

Alternatively, municipalities may completely eliminate the use of the devices. A reduction in the use of the devices will result in a reduction in fine revenue. In the last few years, annual fine revenue has ranged from tens of thousands of dollars to more than \$5.0 million per municipality, depending on the number of devices in that

¹ Currently, the devices are used to detect instances of running a red light or violating the speed limit.

² These figures were calculated by dividing \$73,000 by the amount of a ticket fine, then accounting for the cost of a vendor's percentage. Actual figures ranged between 1.3 tickets and 3.2 tickets per shift.

municipality. Statewide, annual fine revenue may be from \$12.0 million to \$15.0 million.³

Other conditions for use of devices

The other conditions for use of the devices that are imposed by the bill include requiring local authorities to (1) conduct a safety study of each location that is being considered for a device, (2) conduct a public information campaign, (3) publish notice of the intent to use the devices (including where the devices will be used and the date on which the devices will become operational), (4) refrain from imposing fines for violations detected by a device for at least 30 days after deployment of the device, and (5) erect signs leading up to each intersection where a device is located. These requirements may also increase costs for municipalities choosing to use the devices. It is probable, however, that many of the 14 municipalities who currently use the devices already meet many of these requirements.

State fiscal effects

As violations detected by traffic law photo-monitoring devices are not criminal convictions and do not go on a person's driving record, the bill will have no direct fiscal effect on the state.

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³ There is no official record of fine revenues statewide. This estimate is based on media reports and contacts with municipalities currently using the devices.