



CONNECTICUT POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

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March 19, 2007

Senator Andrew McDonald
Representative Michael Lawlor
Chairs, Judiciary Committee

Dear Sen. McDonald and Rep. Lawlor:

On February 21, 2007, we testified in the Transportation Committee on behalf of the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association in support of Proposed Bill #439, ***AN ACT CONCERNING AUTOMATED SPEED ENFORCEMENT ON ROUTE 44 OVER AVON MOUNTAIN.*** Our written testimony is attached.

The Judiciary Committee will hear today testimony on Raised Bill #1443, ***AN ACT CONCERNING AUTOMATED SPEED ENFORCEMENT DEVICES ON ROUTE 44 IN AVON AND WEST HARTFORD.*** The text of RB #1443 is substantially the same as the text of RN #439.

Therefore, please accept our testimony on #439 in lieu of additional testimony on #1443.

Respectfully,

Anthony J. Salvatore

Chief Anthony Salvatore, Cromwell

James J. Strillacci

Chief James Strillacci, West Hartford

Legislative Co-chairs, Connecticut Police Chiefs Association



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Testimony to the Transportation Committee, February 21, 2007 Chiefs Anthony Salvatore & James Strillacci, Connecticut Police Chiefs Association

We support **SB #439, AAC Automated Speed Enforcement on Route 44 over Avon Mountain**, which would allow the municipalities of Avon and West Hartford to conduct a pilot program using cameras to monitor and enforce the speed limit on a single dangerous roadway.

Although there are many locations which would benefit from additional enforcement, we realize that there are many legislators who would hesitate to adopt a new technology on a wide scale. Therefore, we ask an opportunity to test the technology on one hilly, windy, four-mile stretch of road with a sad history of crashes, personal injuries, and fatalities.

Like many communities, we are experiencing both shortages of police officers and heavier traffic on our roads. Officers are available for traffic duty less often and in fewer numbers. Enforcement on Avon Mountain is particularly difficult, due to blind curves and the limited shoulders.

Drivers have noticed. They realize that the chances of getting a speeding ticket are slim, and the result has been a visible increase in disregard for traffic laws. There are so many violators that officers have time to stop only the most flagrant, letting the lesser ones escape.

More traffic and less enforcement is bad news for safety. Speed causes some accidents—drivers go too fast to stop for cars ahead, to stop in slippery conditions, to stay in their own lane, to stay on the road at all. Speed exacerbates other crashes, adding to the severity of injuries and the amount of damage.

But technology can tip the balance back in favor of safety. This bill will allow technology—a factor in so many aspects of our lives—to save lives by improving driver behavior.

Automated traffic enforcement systems which can measure a violator's speed, photograph the car and the tag number, and mail a ticket. They can work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and can detect more violations than the most diligent officer. Warning signs and publicity, reinforced by tickets-by-mail, will persuade drivers that it no longer pays to speed on Avon Mountain. Drivers will obey the law and drive more safely.

Police chiefs get more complaints about traffic than we do about crime, and for good reason. Few citizens witness crime, but most are immersed in traffic daily, and many see violations. Careless driving causes death, injury, and damage, and it worries all drivers and pedestrians. You have the opportunity to turn a hazardous road into an oasis of safety by applying a 21st-century solution to a persistent problem. We hope you'll take it.