

C.M.R.A.
Connecticut Motorcycle Riders Association
Legislative Committee
654 Hanover Road
Meriden, CT 06451

Sandra Clark, Vice Chairman
203-886-8770

imnamericanwmn@hotmail.com

Written Testimony

CMRA opposition:

- There have been studied increases of accidents after red light cameras (RLC) are installed. Data ranging from IIHS's Q & A to roadway engineering evaluations stated that an increase of 15% - 175% of rear end collisions will occur once red light cameras are installed (situations vary and studies vary – but ALL show a rear end collision increase no matter what). Motorcyclists are highly concerned about this fact.
- Short term engineering evaluations using one or all of the below listed “alternative solutions” would cost much less to Connecticut taxpayers than the long term contractual situation that the RLC has to offer should the RLC prove to cause more damage than good (as in other states, cities, and/or counties that have ended their RLC contracts).
- The CMRA is opposed to the fact that previous testimony posted in RLC hearings offered promotion of the RLCs by professionals in Connecticut that take the “Hippocratic Oath”. The testimony posted from previous hearings, disappointingly, did not offer any alternative for the safety of the public as in other states. Intersection travels or signal engineering evaluations may prevent the loss of life, injury and/or property in an intersection other than RLCs. It is hoped that professionals might explore alternative solutions before RLCs are installed.
- Community and Municipal testimony that promote RLCs and no other alternative are disappointing in reference to safety in intersection travel for all road users.
- RLC visual promotional items offered on the news or various online public arenas are proof that red light violators do not stop at red lights and do not stop even after a RLC is installed.
- There are devices offered from GPS alerts for the high end versus glossy sprays to deflect the camera flash on the low end available to the consumer to avoid RLC's completely.

The CMRA hopes for the overall improvement in the flow of traffic and respect for the current laws. The inability for enforcement to be at every intersection during all hours of the day is a recognizable inconvenience. The time lapse for RLCs to possibly work is the concern of the motorcycling public. It is hoped that other less contractual situations may be evaluated by expert traffic engineers to possibly prevent more injury, loss of life and/or property damage prior to the installation of RLCs.

Alternative Solutions (just a few of many):

- Crossing guard programs – offer a possible volunteer effort for neighborhoods in cities, municipalities, and townships. Crossing guards employed for part time primary school intersections would cost less than the monthly contractual fees of RLCs. Part time employees could work from 7 am to 10 am then a second shift from 2:30 pm to 5:30 pm could offer bicyclists and pedestrians safer travels during peak commuter travels during the school year. Part of Connecticut’s Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU, SAFE-TEA-21, or TEA-21) Federal funding is available for crossing guard program initiation. Continued momentum within bicycling and pedestrian communities interested in safe intersection crossing with crossing guards have had “walk-a-thons” and “bike-a-thons” to assist with maintaining a healthier community. (saferoutesinfo.org)
- Adjusting the yellow light timing in intersections can possibly provide safer traffic patterns. Intersections should have yellow lights that are equivalent in seconds to the miles per hour travelled. If a roadway has a 25mph speed limit, then yellow lights should be approximately 2.5 seconds long. When viewing the majority of the RLC promotional visual aides, one can witness that most of the accidents will happen within seconds of the signal light cycle pattern. Most signal patterns even on roadways up to 45 mph in CT have yellow lights that are only 1-2 seconds long. Some states have even caused more danger with shortening the yellow light after RLC devices are installed in order to collect more revenue indebted to the technological ticket devices. This in turn has caused operators to stop short or even stop on green lights in fear of being mailed a ticket.
- Opposing red lights in busy intersections could have a delay prior to the cycle change for opposing traffic. The 1-2 second delay could possibly aide all intersection travelers the ability to pass through a safer intersection.
- Are all of the intersections cleared of visual obstructions? Could a vehicle operator be blinded at certain hours of the day – sunrise and sunset during peak commuting hours? Are lines painted and maintained in intersections?
- Public service announcements could remind the public about legal and safe road use. The public is constantly being reminded about seatbelt usage and impaired driving. Could some of the advertising be expanded to include safe driving and common courtesy announcements to communicate an issue like this?
- Red light violators, ticketed by a RLC, who have emergency situations or circumstances which may justify having violated the law, are denied due process and the ability to explain or justify their actions. Red light violators who are intoxicated or otherwise incapable of operating a motor vehicle safely that get

ticketed by a RLC are still able to continue driving and present a risk to themselves and/or others. Both examples illustrate that the RLC, a piece of technology, will never be a substitute for police presence and enforcement.

Should this legislation pass, the motorcycling community is concerned about motion, magnetic, and weight activated signals that do not sense a motorcyclist. Currently, if all legal attempts to trigger these signals fail, a motorcyclist may wait until traffic clears, carefully run the light, and hope that they are not perceived to be flaunting the law if observed proceeding in this fashion. It is hoped that this particular possibility may be taken into consideration should Legislation for RLC enforcement move forward in the state of Connecticut. First and foremost, the CMRA is requesting that the Connecticut State Legislature evaluate and consider multiple alternative options in traffic engineering and enforcement prior to surrendering to the RLC enforcement choice. Attached you will also find a "Red Light Camera Fact Sheet" provided by the National Motorists Association.

Red Light Camera Fact Sheet

With properly posted speed limits and properly installed traffic-control devices, there is no need for ticket cameras. They can actually make our roads less safe.

1) Ticket cameras do not improve safety.

Despite the claims of companies that sell ticket cameras and provide related services, there is no independent verification that photo enforcement devices improve highway safety, reduce overall accidents, or improve traffic flow. Believing the claims of companies that sell photo enforcement equipment or municipalities that use this equipment is like believing any commercial produced by a company that is trying to sell you something.

2) There is no certifiable witness to the alleged violation.

A picture may be worth a thousand words, but it may also take a thousand words to explain what the picture really means. Even in those rare instances where a law enforcement officer is overseeing a ticket camera, it is highly unlikely that the officer would recall the supposed violation. For all practical purposes, there is no "accuser" for motorists to confront, which is a constitutional right. There is no one that can personally testify to the circumstances of the alleged violation, and just because a camera unit was operating properly when it was set up does not mean it was operating properly when the picture was taken of any given vehicle.

3) Ticket recipients are not adequately notified.

Most governments using ticket cameras send out tickets via first class mail. There is no guarantee that the accused motorists will even receive the ticket, let alone understand it and know how to respond. However, the government makes the assumption that the ticket was received. If motorists fail to pay, it is assumed that they did so on purpose, and a warrant may be issued for their arrest.

4) The driver of the vehicle is not positively identified.

Typically, the photos taken by these cameras do not identify the driver of the offending vehicle. The owner of the vehicle is mailed the ticket, even if the owner was not driving the vehicle and may not know who was driving at the time. The owner of the vehicle is then forced to prove his or her innocence, often by identifying the actual driver who may be a family member, friend or employee.

5) Ticket recipients are not notified quickly.

People may not receive citations until days or sometimes weeks after the alleged violation. This makes it very difficult to defend oneself because it would be hard to remember the circumstances surrounding the supposed violation. There may have been a reason that someone would be speeding or in an intersection after the light turned red. Even if the photo was taken in error, it may be very hard to recall the day in question.

6) These devices discourage the synchronization of traffic lights.

When red-light cameras are used to make money for local governments, these governments are unlikely to jeopardize this income source. This includes traffic-light synchronization, which is the elimination of unneeded lights and partial deactivation of other traffic lights during periods of low traffic. When properly done, traffic-light synchronization decreases congestion, pollution, and fuel consumption.

7) Cameras do not prevent most intersection accidents.

Intersection accidents are just that, accidents. Motorists do not casually drive through red lights. More likely, they do not see a given traffic light because they are distracted, impaired, or unfamiliar with their surroundings. Even the most flagrant of red-light violators will not drive blithely into a crowded intersection, against the light. Putting cameras on poles and taking pictures will not stop these kinds of accidents.

8) There are better alternatives to cameras.

If intersection controls are properly engineered, installed, and operated, there will be very few red-light violations. From the motorists' perspective, government funds should be used on improving intersections, not on ticket cameras. Even in instances where cameras were shown to decrease certain types of accidents, they increased other accidents. Simple intersection and signal improvements can have lasting positive effects, without negative consequences. Cities can choose to make intersections safer with sound traffic engineering or make money with ticket cameras. Unfortunately, many pick money over safety.

9) Ticket camera systems are designed to inconvenience motorists.

Under the guise of protecting motorist privacy, the court or private contractor that sends out tickets often refuses to send a copy of the photo to the accused vehicle owner. This is really because many of the photos do not clearly depict the driver or the driver is obviously not the vehicle owner. Typically, the vehicle owner is forced to travel to a courthouse or municipal building to even see the photograph, an obvious and deliberate inconvenience meant to discourage ticket challenges.

10) Taking dangerous drivers' pictures doesn't stop them.

Photo enforcement devices do not apprehend seriously impaired, reckless or otherwise dangerous drivers. A fugitive could fly through an intersection at 100 mph and not even get his picture taken, as long as the light was green!