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John DeStefano, Jr.
Mayor

Testimony of the City of New Haven
Before the Transportation Committee

In Support of
H.B. No. 5554 AN ACT ENABLING CERTAIN MUNICIPALITIES TO INSTALL TRAFFIC SIGNAL ENFORCEMENT CAMERAS

Submitted by
Jim Travers, Director Transportation Traffic and Parking
February 25, 2013

Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrera and members of the Transportation Committee, my name is Dane White and I am the Deputy Director of the Transportation Department for the City of New Haven. I appear before you to respectfully request your support for HB 5554 which will enable municipalities the option to implement a red light traffic camera enforcement program.

Of the 10 largest cities in New England, New Haven has the highest percentage of residents who walk and/or bike to work. These users share intersection spaces with thousands of motor vehicles every day. Consequently, tragedies involving pedestrians and cyclists often occur at intersections – a shared space with many turning movements and where traditional traffic enforcement is challenging.

To give you a sense for our challenge, we record bicycle and pedestrian counts at key intersections. In 2010, at one sample location, in just one hour, we counted over 1556 pedestrians and 84 cyclists. At this same location there were 36 motor vehicle accidents recorded. These numbers underscore the need and lend to the urgency to improve the safety of our roadways.

The City has already undertaken many steps to advance this goal. In October 2008 the New Haven Board of Aldermen passed Complete Streets legislation that led to the completion and publication of the 2010 Complete Streets Manual, that "promotes a safe, context-sensitive transportation network that serves all users and integrates the planning and design of complete streets that foster a livable, sustainable and economically vibrant community." This strategy has included a StreetSmarts outreach program, traffic enforcement campaigns and traffic calming solutions.

Enabling the use of red light cameras would help places like New Haven provide safer roadways for our residents. Evidence has shown that the use of red light cameras has a deterring effect, and immediately demonstrates a reduction in the amount of violators. A 2011 Study by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety demonstrates that communities with red light cameras saw a significantly larger decrease (35%) in the number of fatal accidents when comparing data from 2004-08 and 1992-96 than those who did not utilize camera programs (14%).

I understand that the Legislature has had many concerns about red light cameras. Since this matter was first introduced over 9 years ago, the technology has firmly established itself. Moreover, the legislature has had time to consider all these concerns, and we believe that as result HB 5554 would enable a program that will enhance roadway safety and protect drivers and all users of our roadways.

Thank you for your consideration.