



Good morning Chairman Markosek, Chairman Geist and members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Rina Cutler, Philadelphia's Deputy Mayor for Transportation and Utilities. I am here this morning on behalf of Mayor Nutter to offer testimony relating to Proposed Regulation #18-415 regarding "Transportation Enhancement Grants from Automated Red Light Enforcement System Revenues," published at 39 Pa.B. 4435 on Saturday, August 1, 2009.

The City objects to a basic aspect of the proposed rules: that funding derived from penalties assessed against drivers violating traffic rules solely at 16 intersections located in Philadelphia may be granted for highway improvement projects located anywhere in the state. It would be fundamentally unfair to use funding derived from serious traffic violations that endanger only Philadelphia residents and visitors, and which fine money is paid entirely by Philadelphia residents and visitors, for the development of traffic safety improvements throughout the Commonwealth. The City supports language that directs fine money to the City or County where the red light cameras are in operation.

I am aware of the concerns expressed by Representative Geist in his September 21, 2009 letter to PennDOT. The City agrees with representative Geist that this program is first and foremost about safety. It was successful as a pilot program and continues to be successful as one of the ways the City is trying to reduce accidents and fatalities in the City. The fatality rate on Roosevelt Boulevard, where the red light camera program originated, decreased from 16 in 2007 to 7 (including one pedestrian death) in 2008. Our goal is to get the fatality rate to

zero. Let me repeat – this is not about revenue enhancement. It is a tool to assist law enforcement with capturing illegal and dangerous driver behavior.

There does seem to be some confusion about the operation of this program. The City of Philadelphia neither operates the Red Light Camera Program nor has any influence as to either the number of citations issued or how those dollars are collected. The City does approve, through City Council, the locations of the cameras. There is no way for the City to either assume control of this program nor have any influence on how many violators are caught on camera. The technology takes photos of vehicles that run the red light. The Parking Authority, not the City, owns and operates the program. Control of the Parking Authority has been in the hands of the State for a number of years. The money will not go to the City's General Fund and will be reinvested specifically for transportation safety programs in the City. While I hear about anecdotal stories of technology manipulation and/or the notion the city would use this program, which it never touches, to raise revenue is both disappointing and cannot be supported by facts.

In fact, a successful red light camera program should operate with a diminishment of citations every year. That has certainly been the case here. In April, 2009, the last month for which data is publicly available, there were an average of 27 violations issued per intersection per day. Compare that to a maximum level of 120 violations on average per intersection per day during the program's first year. This is a reduction of 78%. Hardly the revenue enhancement you may hear about.

An Insurance Institute for Highway Safety evaluation of red light cameras in Philadelphia found that, "increased yellow signal timing reduced red light violation by 36 percent. The addition of red light cameras further reduced red light

violations by 96 percent.” Giving drivers ample warning is critical to the safety impact of the program, signs are posted in advance of intersection with automated enforcement that read , "PHOTO ENFORCED." In fact, the most successful red light cameras generate limited revenue. The results have been remarkable and sunset period of this program has been extended twice, currently to 2011.

When former State Representative George Kenney from Philadelphia sponsored the original automated red light enforcement legislation in 2001, the intent was to determine if this technology could reduce red-light running and improve safety. While it may be true that the ultimate legislation passed by this Legislature was different, that does not change the initial intent of the bill. The history of legislative intent was clear to me: any fine revenue was intended to be reinvested in the community where it was generated for safety projects. In my capacity as Deputy Secretary for Administration at PennDOT, I worked with Representative Kenney and others in the Philadelphia delegation to gather support for this project because it was earmarked for safety improvements in Philadelphia. As part of a multi-agency effort to improve safety and reduce pedestrian deaths on the Roosevelt Boulevard corridor, a press conference was held, including the Philadelphia delegation, where it was announced that the City and State had formed a Task Force to develop safety programs along Roosevelt Boulevard and that the “Kenney” Red Light Camera bill had been introduced, proposing use of fine money generated by the program for safety improvements along the Boulevard and in the City. At no point in the discussion of these issues was there any indication that anybody thought these dollars would or should be used outside of the City of Philadelphia.

As a transportation professional with three decades of experience, I would recommend automated red light enforcement to any jurisdiction where red light running is a persistent problem. It is only fair that revenues derived from automated red-light enforcement program be invested in safety improvements in the City or County where they were generated. This is a fairness and equity issue for the City of Philadelphia. We ask for your support. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.