

Testimony on Philadelphia Red Light Photo Enforcement from Vincent J. Fenerty, Jr., Executive Director, Philadelphia Parking Authority

Good morning. My name is Vince Fenerty and I am the Executive Director of the Philadelphia Parking Authority. I would like to thank Chairman Geist, Chairman McGeehan and the members of the House Transportation Committee for allowing me to testify today. I would like to offer remarks concerning Philadelphia's Automated Red Light Enforcement Program.

As the members of the committee are aware, the Parking Authority is the System Administrator of the Red Light Camera Program. The Program is the first, and only, of its kind in the Commonwealth and was created as a pilot program, with an original sunset provision of December 31, 2005. Due to the Program's success in reducing red light violations and motor vehicle accidents where deployed, the enabling legislation's sunset provision has been extended twice, now currently through December 31, 2011.

Over the past several years, the scope of the Red Light Camera has been judiciously extended throughout Philadelphia through the joint consent of the Parking Authority, the Department of Transportation, and the City of Philadelphia. There are currently ninety cameras at twenty intersections, with plans for more cameras at additional intersections in the near future.

The program has led to large reductions in the number of red light violations issued, which has greatly improved safety at red light camera intersections and on routes surrounding these intersections. The Parking Authority has to date had a number of studies conducted comparing various red light and non-red light intersections to verify the positive effect the program has had on traffic and pedestrian safety. Thomas Nestel, who the Parking Authority retained to do these independent analyses, will summarize his findings following my testimony.

The Parking Authority is aware of some of the various issues and complaints regarding other red light camera programs in some other parts of the country and I would like to briefly comment about some of them. In many other places across the country, a set percentage of revenues that are created from the program go directly to the municipality and the red light camera company that has that particular contract. An argument, which I personally feel could be a compelling one, can then be made that revenue, not the reduction of red light running, could then be the main goal of the program. In Philadelphia, our camera vendor is paid a set fee per camera per month no matter how many violations are issued. Also, after the costs of the program are paid, all proceeds are set to the Motor License Fund of PENNDOT. The argument that revenue generation is the main reason for the program just does not add up in the case of Philadelphia,

Additionally, as mandated by the enabling legislation, all approaches to red light cameras have to have proper signage warning motorists that they are entering a red light camera intersection. Along with an aggressive media campaign by the Parking Authority to alert motorists and pedestrians when each new intersection is activated with a sixty day warning period, it would be very difficult to say that any red light camera location in Philadelphia is not well known and obvious to the public.

Red light camera intersections are an integral safety initiative that effectively tackles problem intersections and surrounding streets. I feel that the red light camera program has made roads safer for pedestrians, drivers, and passengers alike. I hope that the legislature will give the Parking Authority the ability to continue our administration of the program in Philadelphia. The Parking Authority is proud of this

program and think that we have done a good job in administering this pilot program for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the City of Philadelphia.

I would like to thank the members of the committee again and would be happy to answer any questions the members may have about my testimony or about our program after Mr. Nestel presents his findings.