



Testimony
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House Transportation Committee

Red Light Cameras
Proposed for use across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

- **Good** morning, Chairman **Geist**, Chairman **McGeehan** and Committee members.
- I **am** Ronald W. Kosh, Vice President of Public and Government Affairs for AAA Mid-Atlantic.
- **Thank** you for allowing AAA the opportunity to address the issue of Red Light **Cameras** this morning.
- AAA was founded more than a **century** ago advocate for and protect motorists' interests and to advance road and pedestrian **safety**. **We** currently have some three million members in the Commonwealth.
- AAA policy is **explicit** – traffic enforcement, and especially automated **means** such as red light cameras, must be clearly focused upon safety, not revenue **generation**, to earn AAA support.

AAA Mid-Atlantic strongly supported the original Philadelphia red light **camera** program with the **firm** caveat that it operate with certain protections for motorists, many of which were incorporated into the enabling **legislation**, such as:

- Posted warning signs telling motorists that red light cameras are present.
- Reasonable and appropriate penalties defined in the legislation.
- The mandate that camera vendor be paid a flat amount that in no way correlates to the number of citations issued.
- **PennDot** has sole responsibility for approving intersections.
- Cameras are sited based solely upon crash data not traffic volume.
- **Yellow** light timing must be no **less** than federal standards according to the Uniform **Manual**.



- All revenue must **go** to the Motor **License Fund** to pay for safety and mobility **projects** throughout the state not **just** the local jurisdiction.
- We believe the **enabling** legislation that allowed Philadelphia to **install cameras** was well designed and has **allowed** Pennsylvania to avoid many of the **abuses** we have found in other **states**.
- For **example**, in **Glassboro**, New Jersey -- the first southern New Jersey municipality to issue a red light **camera** ticket admitted that it issued **12,000 tickets** worth \$1 million at an intersection where the yellow light time was illegally **short**. Motorists were given just 3 seconds of yellow **warning** before the camera began snapping -- as opposed to the 4 **seconds** mandated by state regulations. We also have found shortened **amber** times in other **states** as well and in every case the cameras were under the jurisdiction of a **city** or municipality that **also** claimed all **the** revenue.
- You should also note that **these red-light camera discussions** in Pennsylvania comes just as a backlash against the **technology** is spreading across the country. In 2010, the Ohio legislature overwhelmingly approved a **bill prohibiting** the use of red-light cameras and speed cameras in the state. In addition, some major cities **such as Los Angeles, Houston, and Colorado Springs** **have** recently deactivated the red-light **cameras**. **San Diego** and **others** had already done so a few years ago.
- **The** purpose of red light cameras is not to catch irresponsible drivers in the act of intentionally running a red light and it **is certainly** not to merely **enhance** revenue. Considerable mitigation of ma light **running** can also be **accomplished** by **extending** the amber time, which has been **done** in some cities that have **eliminated** their **cameras**.
- The **objective** should be to focus on slowing motorists down, **or to stop them** from **running** red lights in the first place – **in** order to prevent crashes fmm occurring and **pedestrians from being hit**.
- While **cameras** are meant to serve as a deterrent **and** to take the place of police officers who can't **be** at every **intersection**, the AAA experience with the abuse of the technology **has** been to not blindly **accept** the success of these programs.
- We have from the beginning, on behalf of **motorists**, **demand**ed transparency and accountability.
- **If Pennsylvania has** identified red-light **running** as a safety **issue**, AAA believes that a substantial commitment be first employed to address the problem. **For** example:
 - **Public** education about the **dangers** of red light running;
 - **Engineering** and traffic management **improvements** to change **environmental** conditions at **problematic** intersections;



- A study to **determine** that signal timing has been established in **accordance** with accepted **traffic** engineering standards;
 - Commitment of **uniformed** police officers to **immediately** ticket red-light runners **and** provide a visible deterrent at locations known for chronic problems or accidents.
- Prior to any program **being** instituted, the **jurisdictional entity** should publicly disclose information and analysis about the number of red light violators and intersection crashes, including comparative data that justifies the **installation** of cameras. For example, the University of New **Mexico** studied 20 Albuquerque intersections **monitored** by red light cameras. Researchers **found** safety had declined or not improved at a third of the intersections.
 - To avoid such issues in Pennsylvania, **traffic engineering** studies must first be performed on **intersections** proposed for monitoring. **As** noted by the **Transportation Advisory Committee** final report of October **2011**, "...a potential negative with the current law is that it neither defines any intersection selection criteria nor requires an engineering study to be performed."
 - The **report** correctly states that "...having this in place would confirm that there are no existing problems with the existing traffic signals, etc., at proposed ARLE intersections. This would also improve accountability, as selection criteria would ensure consistency and transparency with the public."
 - In general, **AAA** is **concerned** about the considerable lack of relevant **statistical** disclosure, and analysis, especially when more cameras are being **installed** in Philadelphia and in some **550** municipalities across the nation.
 - Will **expanding** cameras **across** Pennsylvania make our roads and streets safer? It is a fair question given the rapid expansion of the red light camera **program**.
 - Even with vendor payments limited to **flat** monthly fees, their revenue grows, as does **government** revenue, every time another camera is installed. Moreover, the Pennsylvania Transportation Advisory **Committee's** find report specifically states that "... most signalized locations across the state would not be self-supporting."
 - The bottom line **is**: How will the success of the program be **measured**? **If** it will be **measured** by the number of tickets issued and revenue collected, then it will never win the trust of **Pennsylvania** motorists. The only true success measure is whether the number of crashes and fatalities due to red light **running** has declined.
 - **AAA** believes a **properly-designed**, responsibly-operated automated red light enforcement program can become a valuable tool for police and **traffic** safety professionals to improve the safety of our roads and save lives. But they **are** not a substitute for safely-engineered intersections with properly-timed traffic **signals**.
 - **Thank** you for the opportunity to address you today,

