

I support this bill for three reasons: safer roads, safer policing, and better use of public resources.

1. Camera enforcement makes roads safer by enabling consistent enforcement of traffic laws. Drivers routinely violate traffic laws because they know they're unlikely to be cited, but traffic cameras allow consistent enforcement, making them a more effective deterrent to unsafe driving. In one test in Portland, speed cameras reduced top-end speeding (>10mph above the limit) by 93%. Allowing agents other than police officers to review camera citations would remove a bottleneck that currently limits the use of camera enforcement.

2. Traffic cameras can reduce the need for unsafe interactions between police and the public. Traffic stops create tense situations where fear, uncertainty, or momentary misjudgment can escalate into violence, putting both drivers and officers at risk. Enforcing traffic laws with cameras instead avoids those potentially dangerous interactions, allowing moving violations to be handled without direct contact, as we already handle parking tickets.

3. Police departments are facing recruiting challenges and budget constraints. The Portland Police Bureau recently shifted traffic enforcement officers to routine patrol positions, effectively eliminating the Traffic Division—a move that Portland's police chief himself said would be "detrimental to the safety of our community," and which the Portland Police Association said could "have deadly consequences." This bill would lighten the load of police departments by relieving them of a routine office job, letting cities enforce traffic laws while allowing sworn police officers to focus on roles where their full training is most necessary.