

5 March 2024

Minnesota Senate
c/o Beth Ethier
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RE: SF2026

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to voice my support for the speed safety camera enforcement pilot and overall program. As a daily pedestrian, biker, and transit user, I have regularly experienced high speeds and red light running in my community. I'll also admit that when I do drive, the road design and behaviors of my fellow drivers are also providing plenty of pressure to drive faster, get through the next light, turn faster, and generally be less safe with my driving behavior. A large part of that is road design, which can take years if not decades to change. The more malleable and immediate possible change, though, is enforcement of the rules of the road.

There is a general sense, which I agree with, that traffic laws are not being enforced so that the risk of any government penalty from speeding or running a red light is highly unlikely. Added on top of that that humans are generally very bad at estimating the risks of their actions means that at nearly every light cycle in my neighborhood, 2-3 cars speed through an obvious red light and endanger all user types around them, whether pedestrian, biker, roller, pet, or driver. I'll also state plainly that I don't think it is a good use of law enforcement officers' time to be pulling over drivers for every infraction. That action can create traffic headaches and safety concerns of its own as traffic builds up and drivers inevitably "rubber neck" to see what is going on. There are better uses of time for our law enforcement human resources than writing tickets. *That said*, enforcement is still an important tool to ensure roads don't regress into total chaos.

Enter traffic cameras. We have come far enough with our camera technology that we can easily, remotely enforce traffic rules without needing to involve our limited law enforcement human resources. Cameras can be tailored to not take pictures of drivers, removing one of the main concerns expressed about traffic cameras (even if I personally find the aversion to this extra proof to be ridiculous). With proper oversight, camera enforcement can also be rolled in such a way as to avoid racial profiling by neighborhood. Overall, though there are some understandable concerns about the use of cameras, they are far and away the easiest and safest form of enforcement of traffic rules.

I would honestly love to see camera enforcement expanded to be on our buses to enforce illegal parking or blocking of lanes. I am also in favor of allowing citizens to capture photos through a police app to help expand traffic violation enforcement, but I understand fully that these preferences are outside the scope of this legislation. My one final thought on pieces that are outside of the current scope of this legislation is that I would encourage lawmakers to consider a sliding fee scale based on reported income. A \$40 fine for someone making 30% of the area median income is a lot more impactful than a \$40 fine for someone making 500% of the area median income. There is an extra layer of information needed here, but I do think it would add to the equity of enforcement.

Thank you for considering this testimony and I appreciate your collective work on this topic. I urge you to pass this pilot to help make our communities and our roads safer. We have enough other concerns in our day to day lives without needing to worry about someone speeding through a red light.

Thank You,

Peter Schmitt