



**TESTIMONY BY
THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS**

**BEFORE THE
JOINT LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION**

ON

AUTOMATED SPEED ENFORCEMENT FOR LOCAL ROADS

PRESENTED BY

**BRIAN RENGERT
DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS**

**MAY 12, 2025
HARRISBURG, PA**

Chairman Hutchinson and members of the Local Government Commission:

Thank you for inviting PSATS to present remarks on behalf of the 1,453 townships of the second class represented by our association. My name is Brian Rengert and I am the Director of Government Affairs for PSATS.

PSATS is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization committed to preserving and strengthening township government and securing greater visibility and involvement for townships in the state and federal political arenas. Townships of the second class cover 95% of Pennsylvania's land mass and represent 5.7 million Pennsylvanians — more residents than any other type of municipality in the commonwealth.

PSATS has long supported providing municipal police with optional and effective tools to keep roadways safe and reduce traffic accidents and fatalities. Township supervisors frequently hear complaints from their residents that cars are traveling at excessive speeds and causing dangerous conditions on roads within their townships. Residents worry about the safety of their children, their pets, and themselves on roads where speeding is prevalent.

In 2022, the most recent data available from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's National Center for Statistics and Analysis, Pennsylvania ranked fourth highest amongst all states for speeding fatalities on local roads (*only North Carolina, Texas, and California were higher*). In fact, 39 percent of all traffic fatalities in Pennsylvania are related to speeding, which is 10 percentage points higher than the national average. What is startling about these statistics is that 95 of these speeding fatalities in Pennsylvania occur on local roadways where municipal police have limited enforcement tools, while 56 speeding fatalities occurred on interstates.

Current speed enforcement tools available to Pennsylvania's local police are antiquated, clumsy, and often require officers to walk onto and across congested roads with documented speeding problems simply to set up speed enforcement devices. Officers must pull over offenders and confront often agitated individuals face-to-face. This places our officers directly in harm's way when other, more effective methods are available.

Some township police departments use ENRADD (*electronic non-radar device*) for speed enforcement, which uses electronic transmitters, receivers, and infrared beams to calculate the time and speed at which a vehicle passes through the beams. These units are accurate and more reliable than VASCAR (*visual average speed computer and recorder*), the other option for Pennsylvania's municipal police.

ENRADD allows enforcement of speed limits in areas of the municipality where officers are unable to use VASCAR, enabling officers to be less visible to motorists and monitor speed from a distance with a wireless device that can be operated with only one officer. However, ENRADD must be set up on the side of the road and takes about 10 minutes to deploy. Silver Spring Township Police in Cumberland County relayed an instance where one of the devices was hit by a speeding driver while the officer was setting it up. Thankfully, the officer was not injured in this event, but the department needed to purchase a replacement unit. ENRADD is no longer

manufactured, so costs have risen for replacements and parts. Silver Spring relayed their unit cost \$5,000 and can be taken with the officer while performing speed enforcement stops.

Freedom Township Police Department in Blair County and the Northern Regional Police Department serving several municipalities in Allegheny County use VASCAR for speed enforcement. VASCAR requires officers to physically paint lines on the roadways, another safety risk for officers. VASCAR and ENRADD cannot be set up on roads with curves and generally, motorists can see these units being deployed and rapidly slow when approaching these devices. VASCAR requires least two officers in two separate cars, one to measure speed and remain stationary, while a second officer serves as a chase car.

Unlike the Pennsylvania State Police, Pennsylvania's municipal police departments are not permitted to use radar or LIDAR (*light detection and ranging*) technology, which are commonly used by all other municipal police departments in the country. Even radar is becoming outdated technology, although it would allow municipal police to be more efficient and effective in speed enforcement, increasing safety for their residents and visitors as well as our officers.

With radar and LIDAR, one officer could both take the speed measurements and stop the driver for exceeding the posted speed limit. Both can be operated on hilly or mountainous terrain and during inclement weather. Calibrations are required less frequently. While radar and lidar are not exactly new technology, each is far safer and easier for police officers to use when compared to current allowable methods for speed enforcement and we continue to support these options.

Authorizing municipal police to use more effective tools, including automated speed enforcement, would greatly increase their ability to enforce speed limits and therefore improve safety in our communities. Automated speed enforcement (ASE) has proven to be an effective tool in Pennsylvania and with state and local police departments across the country. PSATS believes that Pennsylvania's current ASE program should be expanded to help protect our road workers, police officers, and community from reckless drivers on our local roads.

Currently, 30 states and Washington D.C. provide for automatic speed enforcement by state law and/or local ordinance. Some states allow cameras to operate statewide, others in specific jurisdictions, and others still in specific places including work zones, school zones, and residential districts. New York City was the first to use these devices in 1992. The surrounding states of Maryland and Delaware allow the state and local governments to use these devices.

ASE devices can be fixed at a specific location, such as cameras at an intersection and mobile units can be mounted and moved between enforcement locations. The USDOT recommends speed safety cameras as one of its [Proven Safety Countermeasures](#) and cites studies showing a 20% to 37% reduction in roadway fatalities and injuries when used.

A speed enforcement study in school zones in Georgia documented a 83.1% to 98.9% reduction in speeders of 10 mph or more when comparing a pre-program speed study to post-enforcement in 12 different counties. Interestingly, a speed study during the warning phase of each of these programs showed a 41% to 93.6% reduction in speeders of 10mph – before any citations were issued.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety released a 2015 study on Montgomery County, Maryland, which had used speed cameras since 2007 and found that its use led to long-term changes in driver behavior and substantial reductions in deaths and injuries. As of 2014, the county had 56 fixed cameras, 30 portable cameras, and six mobile speed vans. The cameras were used on residential streets with speed limits of 35 mph or less and in school zones.

Six months into the program, the proportion of drivers traveling at least 10 miles over the speed limit had fallen on streets with cameras by 59% compared to similar roads nearby without speed cameras and saw a 19% drop in crashes involving a fatality or incapacitating injury.

In 2012, the county changed its program to focus enforcement on corridors or long segments of road instead of specific locations. Cameras were regularly moved to different locations along the same roads, which led to further safety gains of an additional 30% beyond cameras alone. On residential roads with speed limits of 25-35mph, fatal or incapacitating injuries were reduced by 39%.

The study found that cameras succeeded in changing behavior only if drivers know about them. A survey showed that 95% were aware of them, more than three-quarters had reduced their speed because of the program, and 59% had received a speed-camera ticket personally. In fact, drivers slowed down on roads that weren't eligible for automated enforcement, further increasing the safety impact. Of the drivers surveyed, 62% said they favored speed cameras on residential streets, which means that even those who had been ticketed supported the cameras.

As you heard in the first hearing, ASE has proven to be an effective traffic enforcement tool to keep highway work crews safe on the Turnpike and in active work zones on state highways, as well as selected corridors in Philadelphia. Speed cameras use radar or lidar detectors to measure a vehicle's speed. If a vehicle is traveling faster than the posted speed limit, the camera will record its speed and license plate, along with the date, time and location. A civil violation notice is mailed to the registered owner if the driver exceeded the speed limit by a specified amount, which in Pennsylvania is 11 mph or more above the posted limit.

In Pennsylvania, drivers speeding through these areas receive a written warning for a first offense, \$75 for a second offense, and \$150 for a third or subsequent offense. Violations are civil and are not considered a criminal conviction or made part of the driver's operating record. Violations cannot be used by insurance companies for merit rating purposes or to impose surcharge points.

We support expanding Pennsylvania's program under the current rules, including warning signage, allowance of 11 mph or above, and the current civil violation process. Criteria should be provided for determining which roads or corridors are candidates for these cameras, as is currently done by PennDOT for everything from traffic calming devices to work zone safety to traffic control measures on local roads.

To be clear, the commonwealth and PennDOT set rules and procedures for our local roads that townships must follow. For example, if a township wants to impose weight limits on a

township road, it must follow the procedures in state law: perform an engineering study, pass an ordinance implementing the results of the study, post signs notifying trucks of the rules, and administer the program in accordance with PennDOT regulations and publications. We expect similar procedures for an ASE program.

We expect that like the commonwealth, townships that choose to implement such an option will use vendors to provide the cameras and administrative support for the program. The Commonwealth could provide contracts that municipalities could use through the COSTARS program to reduce bidding costs. We expect that those townships with police departments and experience with speeding enforcement will be the first to use ASEs if authorized.

PSATS supports an option for municipalities without police to use ASEs for documented speeding enforcement problems. Again, we would anticipate that this would be done in accordance with criteria set by the commonwealth and could be done cooperatively or under the oversight of the Pennsylvania State Police. Some states and municipalities designate an employee to administer and oversee the cameras. For those with or without local police, a fair appeal process will need to be included in the legislation, as it is for the current authorizations.

If authorized, a public information campaign should be offered prior to issuing citations to provide sufficient warnings and make the public aware of the new safety efforts. Municipalities using cameras could provide notice on websites and social media, as well as signage, prior to enforcement.

Finally, every time that local speed enforcement is discussed, there are those that will claim that these tools will simply be used to raise revenue. Nothing could be further from the truth. Under current law, speed enforcement is time-intensive and expensive. 42 Pa. C.S.A. Section 3573(b) (2) stipulates that prosecution under Title 75 by local police results in the municipality retaining half of the fine money levied on the speeding portion of the ticket, not the total fine stipulated on the ticket. 75 Pa. C.S.A. Section 3362 establishes the minimum fines at \$35 for violating the limit of 55 miles per hour or less, and \$42.50 for exceeding a posted speed limit of 65 miles per hour. This means that municipalities receive \$17.50 per ticket for traffic enforcement on local roads, an amount that does not cover the cost for officers to enforce the speed limit, let alone process the paperwork and attend hearings if the ticket is challenged.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to comment on this critical public safety issue. We look forward to working with you on speed enforcement tools that will help save lives.