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## SENATE BILL NO. 92

Offered January 14, 2004

Prefiled January 6, 2004

A BILL to amend and reenact § 46.2-833.01 of the Code of Virginia, relating to use of photo-monitoring systems to enforce traffic light signals.

Patron—Devolites

Referred to Committee on Transportation

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That § 46.2-833.01 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 46.2-833.01. Use of photo-monitoring systems to enforce traffic light signals; penalty.

A. The governing body of any county, city having a population of more than 390,000, any city having a population of at least 200,000 but less than 225,000, any county having the urban county executive form of government, any county adjacent to such county, and any city, or town adjacent to or surrounded by such county except any county having the county executive form of government and the cities surrounded by such county may, after holding a public hearing, provide by ordinance for the establishment of a demonstration traffic safety program imposing monetary liability on the operator of a motor vehicle for failure to comply with traffic light signals in such locality in accordance with the provisions of this section. Each such locality may install and operate traffic light signal photo-monitoring systems at no more than twenty-five intersections within each locality at any one time. No traffic light signal photo-monitoring system shall be used for the sole purpose of generating revenue.

B. The operator of a vehicle shall be liable for a monetary penalty imposed pursuant to this section if such vehicle is found, as evidenced by information obtained from a traffic light signal violation monitoring system, to have failed to comply with a traffic light signal within such locality.

C. Proof of a violation of this section shall be evidenced by information obtained from a traffic light signal violation monitoring system authorized pursuant to this section. A certificate, sworn to or affirmed by a technician law-enforcement officer employed by a locality authorized to impose penalties pursuant to this section, or a facsimile thereof, based upon inspection of photographs, microphotographs, videotape, or other recorded images produced by a traffic light signal violation monitoring system, shall be prima facie evidence of the facts contained therein. Any photographs, microphotographs, videotape, or other recorded images evidencing such a violation shall be available for inspection in any proceeding to adjudicate the liability for such violation pursuant to an ordinance adopted pursuant to this section.

D. In the prosecution of an offense established under this section, prima facie evidence that the vehicle described in the summons issued pursuant to this section was operated in violation of this section, together with proof that the defendant was at the time of such violation the owner, lessee, or renter of the vehicle, shall constitute in evidence a rebuttable presumption that such owner, lessee, or renter of the vehicle was the person who committed the violation. Such presumption shall be rebutted if the owner, lessee, or renter of the vehicle (i) files an affidavit by regular mail with the clerk of the general district court that he or she was not the operator of the vehicle at the time of the alleged violation or (ii) testifies in open court under oath that he or she was not the operator of the vehicle at the time of the alleged violation. Such presumption shall also be rebutted if a certified copy of a police report, showing that the vehicle had been reported to the police as stolen prior to the time of the alleged violation of this section, is presented, prior to the return date established on the summons issued pursuant to this section, to the court adjudicating the alleged violation.

E. For purposes of this section "owner" means the registered owner of such vehicle on record with the Department of Motor Vehicles. For purposes of this section, "traffic light signal violation-monitoring system" means a vehicle sensor installed to work in conjunction with a traffic light that automatically produces two or more photographs, two or more microphotographs, a videotape, or other recorded images of each vehicle at the time it is used or operated in violation of §§ 46.2-833, 46.2-835, or § 46.2-836. For each such vehicle, at least one recorded image shall be of the vehicle before it has illegally entered the intersection, and at least one recorded image shall be of the same vehicle after it has illegally entered that intersection. No traffic light signal violation photo-monitoring system shall record the image of any vehicle proceeding lawfully through an intersection unless the image appears incidental to the recording of an image of a vehicle entering an intersection during the red phase of a signal.

F. Imposition of a penalty pursuant to this section shall not be deemed a conviction as an operator and shall not be made part of the operating record of the person upon whom such liability is imposed

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59 nor shall it be used for insurance purposes in the provision of motor vehicle insurance coverage. No  
60 monetary penalty imposed under this section shall exceed fifty dollars nor shall it include court costs.

61 G. A summons for a violation of this section may be executed pursuant to § 19.2-76.2.  
62 Notwithstanding the provisions of § 19.2-76, a summons for a violation of this section may be executed  
63 by mailing by first-class mail a copy thereof to the address of the owner, lessee, or renter of the vehicle  
64 as shown, in the case of vehicle owners, in the records of the Department of Motor Vehicles or, in the  
65 case of vehicle lessees or renters, in the records of the lessor or rentor. Every such mailing shall include,  
66 in addition to the summons, a notice of (i) the summoned person's ability to rebut the presumption that  
67 he was the operator of the vehicle at the time of the alleged violation through the filing of an affidavit  
68 as provided in subsection D of this section and (ii) instructions for filing such affidavit, including the  
69 address to which the affidavit is to be sent. If the summoned person fails to appear on the date of return  
70 set out in the summons mailed pursuant to this section, the summons shall be executed in the manner  
71 set out in § 19.2-76.3. No proceedings for contempt or arrest of a person summoned by mailing shall be  
72 instituted for failure to appear on the return date of the summons.

73 H. In any action at law brought by any person or entity as the result of personal injury or death or  
74 damage to property, such evidence derived from a photo-monitoring system shall be admissible in the  
75 same method prescribed as required in the prosecution of an offense established under this section  
76 without the requirements of authentication as otherwise required by law.

77 I. On behalf of a locality, a private entity may not obtain records regarding the registered owners of  
78 vehicles which fail to comply with traffic light signals. A private entity may enter into an agreement  
79 with a locality to be compensated for providing the traffic light signal violation-monitoring system or  
80 equipment, and all related support services, to include consulting, operations and administration.  
81 However, only an employee of the locality may swear to or affirm the certificate required by subsection  
82 C.

83 J. ~~The provisions of this section shall expire on July 1, 2005. When selecting intersections for a~~  
84 ~~traffic light signal violation photo-monitoring system, a locality shall consider factors such as (i) the~~  
85 ~~accident rate for the intersection, (ii) the rate of red light violations occurring at the intersection~~  
86 ~~(number of violations per number of vehicles), (iii) the difficulty experienced by law-enforcement officers~~  
87 ~~in patrol cars or on foot in apprehending violators, and (iv) the ability of law-enforcement officers to~~  
88 ~~apprehend violators safely within a reasonable distance from the violation. Localities may consider the~~  
89 ~~risk to pedestrians as a factor, if applicable.~~

90 K. ~~Before the implementation of a traffic light signal photo-monitoring system at an intersection, the~~  
91 ~~locality shall complete an engineering safety analysis that addresses signal timing and other~~  
92 ~~location-specific safety features. The length of the yellow phase shall be established based on the~~  
93 ~~recommended methodology of the Institute of Transportation Engineers. All photo-monitoring systems~~  
94 ~~shall provide a minimum 0.3-second grace period between the time the signal turns red and the first~~  
95 ~~violation is recorded. If recommended by the engineering safety analysis, the locality shall make~~  
96 ~~reasonable location-specific safety improvements, including signs and pavement markings.~~

97 L. ~~Any locality that uses a photo-monitoring system to enforce traffic light signals shall place~~  
98 ~~conspicuous signs within 500 feet of the intersection approach at which a photo-monitoring system is~~  
99 ~~used. There shall be a rebuttable presumption that such signs were in place at the time of the~~  
100 ~~commission of the traffic light signal violation.~~

101 M. ~~Any locality that uses a photo-monitoring system to enforce traffic light signals shall evaluate the~~  
102 ~~program at least annually. This evaluation shall include at a minimum a review of the monthly violation~~  
103 ~~rates, rear-end accidents and other accidents attributed to traffic light signal violations at the~~  
104 ~~intersections equipped with cameras. Evaluation results shall be made available to the public.~~

105 N. ~~Prior to or coincident with the implementation or expansion of such a system, a locality shall~~  
106 ~~conduct a public awareness program, advising the public that the locality is implementing or expanding~~  
107 ~~a traffic light signal photo-monitoring system.~~