

CITY OF BOZEMAN TESTIMONY

Deputy Mayor Cunningham

House Local Government Committee

02-14-2023

Good Afternoon, Chair Regier and Judiciary Committee Members, My name is Terry Cunningham (C-U-N-N-I-N-G-H-A-M), I am the Deputy Mayor elected to represent Bozeman's 54,000 residents. Thank you for the opportunity today to testify in SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 414 on behalf of the City of Bozeman.

Keeping Bozeman residents safe on our roads is becoming more challenging as we add to our traffic grid and our population continues to grow. We have more kids biking to school, more runners, bikers & scooters dealing with busy intersections and more seniors trying to navigate street crossings. Adding to the complexity, we have many young and college-age drivers with devices that compete for their attention.

In order to reduce conflicts and promote traffic safety, use crash data to deploy law enforcement to high-risk intersections, we've stepped up enforcement near schools, and we have recently implemented the Bozeman SAFE program to try to reduce the likelihood of fatal crashes between cars and pedestrians. But these efforts aren't enough to change the behaviors of our worst traffic offenders. Traffic cameras are a proven safety tool that can actually change behaviors.

This legislation would allow law enforcement in coordination with city traffic engineers to enforce traffic laws at intersections such as school zone speed limits, hit and runs, and failure to yield to emergency vehicles. Further, these cameras are useful to law enforcement in more serious crimes such as stolen vehicles or kidnappings. Automated traffic enforcement allows law enforcement to spend more time investigating and stopping more serious crimes, and the technology changes behavior so drivers are safer and more attentive on the roadways.

We don't see this as a money-grab; we see it as being complimentary to our other traffic safety efforts. We can use the technology to issue warnings and we can keep fines reasonable. I am testifying today that revenue generation is not a goal of this technology, it's the safety of our citizens.

Are traffic cameras right for every municipality in Montana? Probably not. The traffic safety issues in Conrad and Sidney are different than those in Billings and Bozeman. Allowing individual municipalities the flexibility to craft solutions that work best for them – including the possibility of traffic cameras – allows for home-grown solutions and greater accountability. Thank you Chair Regier and members of the Judiciary Committee for hearing my testimony SUPPORTING HOUSE BILL 414 today.