ADVOCATES
FOR HIGHWAY
& AUTO SAFETY

February 19, 2025

The Honorable Warren Petersen, Senate President
The Honorable Thomas "T.J." Shope, President Pro Tempore
The Honorable Janae Shamp, Majority Leader
The Honorable Priya Sundareshan, Minority Leader
Arizona Senate
1700 West Washington Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dear President Petersen, President Pro Tempore Shope, Majority Leader Shamp and Minority Leader Sundareshan:

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates), an alliance of consumer, safety, medical, public health and law enforcement groups and insurance companies working together to pass highway and auto safety laws that prevent crashes, save lives, reduce injuries, and contain costs, urges you to oppose Senate Bill (SB) 1019 and Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 1002. SB 1019 prohibits the use of automated enforcement (AE) systems, an effective technology to deter speeding and red light running, and SCR 1002 seeks to do the same through a referendum.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), an estimated 1,315 people lost their lives on Arizona roads in 2023,[i] a 70 percent increase since 2014.[ii] In addition to the physical and emotional burden, traffic crashes exact a financial toll. In 2019, the estimated cost of traffic crashes in Arizona surpassed $5.9 billion, effectively imposing a $817 “crash tax” on all Arizona residents.[iii] When updated for inflation alone, in 2025, costs would equate to $7.5 billion and $1,031 respectively.[iv] Clearly, traffic safety is a serious issue that urgently needs improvement rather than the dismantling of an effective traffic safety countermeasure.

Speeding is one of the most common contributing factors to crashes and fatalities including 29 percent of all fatal crashes nationally in 2022.[v] Speeding is even more prevalent and destructive in Arizona; in 2022, 33 percent of all fatal crashes in the state were speeding related and ended 431 lives.[vi]

Small increases in speed cause serious declines in safety. Crash tests show that speed upticks of even five to ten miles-per-hour (mph) greatly escalate a driver’s risk of injury or death.[vii] Speed increases also immensely impact pedestrians and other vulnerable road users (VRUs). The average risk of death for a pedestrian is 10 percent at an impact speed of 23 mph, 25 percent at 32 mph, and 50 percent at 42 mph.[viii] Further, drivers who speed have been shown to exhibit additional deadly driving behaviors; more than half (52 percent) of speeding passenger vehicle drivers in fatal crashes were unbuckled, compared to 22 percent of non-speeding drivers.[ix]

Speed safety cameras are proven to deter speeding and its impact and are recommended for state and local adoption by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and the Federal Highway Administration (FWHA), among others.[x] A study by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) found that speed safety cameras alone resulted in a 19 percent reduction in the likelihood that a crash caused a fatal or incapacitating injury.[xi] Similarly, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) found

that AE reduces fatalities and injuries by 20-37 percent and is particularly effective in school and construction zones.[xii] Repealing use of speed safety cameras will nullify an essential tool, elevating risk for all road users.

Red light safety cameras show similar safety benefits. In 2022, 1,149 people were killed and more than 107,000 were injured in red light running crashes in the United States.[xiii] In fact, 25 percent of drivers admit to running a red light in the past 30 days[xiv] even though 83 percent of Americans believe that doing so is "very" or "extremely" dangerous.[xv] Red light safety cameras are an effective tool to deter this behavior. According to the Journal of Safety Research, rates of fatal red light running crashes were 21 percent lower and all fatal crashes were 14 percent lower at signalized intersections in cities with camera programs.[xvi] Conversely, cities that took down their red light safety cameras experienced a 30 percent increase in deadly red light running crashes and a 16 percent increase in fatal crashes at signalized intersections overall.[xvii] This "spillover" effect, wherein people modify their driving habits to avoid running red lights at intersections with and without safety cameras, amplifies the benefits of such programs overall. The data are clear – red light safety cameras are successfully changing driver behavior and making intersections safer.

Law enforcement officers risk their lives when performing their duties on the roadways every day, and it is implausible for law enforcement officers to be everywhere and catch every violation. AE augments traditional enforcement without requiring a traffic stop.

On average, nearly four people are killed every day as a result of crashes on roads in the state.[xviii] We urge you to reject SB 1019 and SCR 1002. Instead, we encourage you to advance measures like House Bill 2786 to protect road users and keep Arizona families whole and visitors safe. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Catherine Chase
President

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[i] Traffic Safety Facts: Crash Stats, Early Estimate of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities in 2023, NHTSA, April 2024, DOT HS 813 561, available at https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813561.

[ii] State Traffic Safety Information for Arizona (2022), NHTSA, available at https://cdan.dot.gov/STSI/stsi.htm.

[iii] The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2019 (Revised), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), DOT HS 813 403, February 2023, available at: https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813403.

[iv] CPI Inflation Calculator, BLS, Jan. 2019 to Jan. 2025, available at https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl.

[v] NHTSA. (2024). Overview of Motor Vehicle Crashes in 2022. U.S. Department of Transportation, available at https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813560.

[vi] State Traffic Safety Information for Arizona (2022), NHTSA, available at https://cdan.dot.gov/STSI/stsi.htm.

[vii] Impact of Speeds on Drivers and Vehicles – Results from Crash Tests, AAA Foundation for Safety, Humanetics, and IIHS, Jan. 2021, available at https://www.iihs.org/api/datastoredocument/bibliography/2218.

[viii] Impact Speed and a Pedestrian's Risk of Severe Injury or Death, AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, Sep. 2011., available at https://aaafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/2011PedestrianRiskVsSpeedReport.pdf.

[ix] Traffic Safety Facts 2022 Data: Speeding, NHTSA, Jul. 2024, DOT HS 813582, available at https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813582.

[x] Reducing Speeding-Related Crashes Involving Passenger Vehicles, NTSB, July 2017, SS-17-01, available at https://www.ntsb.gov/safety/safety-studies/Documents/SS1701.pdf.

[xi] Effects of Automated Speed Enforcement in Montgomery County Maryland on Vehicle Speeds, Public Opinion and Crashes, IIHS, August; available at https://www.iihs.org/topics/bibliography/ref/2097.

[xii] Speed Safety Camera Program Planning and Operations Guide, Federal Highway Administration, January 2023, available at Speed Safety Camera Program Planning and Operations Guide.

[xiii] Red Light Running, IIHS, available at https://www.iihs.org/topics/red-light-running#overview.

[xiv] 2022 Traffic Safety Culture Index, AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, November 2023, available at https://newsroom.aaa.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/AAAFTS-TSCI-Technical-Report.pdf.

[xv] Ibid.

[xvi] Effects of turning on and off red light cameras on fatal crashes in large U.S. cities, Journal of Safety Research, June 2017, available at https://www.iihs.org/topics/bibliography/ref/2121.

[xvii] Ibid.

[xviii] State Traffic Safety Information for Arizona (2022), NHTSA, available at https://cdan.dot.gov/STSI/stsi.htm.