ADVOCATES
FOR HIGHWAY
& AUTO SAFETY

February 23, 2026

The Honorable Lamont Bagby, Chair
Senate Committee on Transportation
Senate of Virginia
P.O. Box 396
Richmond, Virginia 23218

Dear Chair Bagby:

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, supports enactment of House Bill (HB) 994. This legislation expands use of speed safety cameras to safety red zones on roads with speed limits of 45 miles per hour (mph) or less located in a priority pedestrian corridor or high-risk pedestrian corridor, as identified by the state, to protect vulnerable road users (VRUs) and others. We urge you to take swift action to expand use of this proven, lifesaving technology to curb speeding and the deadly consequences, while recommending an amendment.

In 2024, there were an overall estimated 910[1] traffic fatalities in Virginia, which is an 21 percent increase from 2015 to 2024.[2] Speeding is a major contributor to traffic fatalities as 35 percent of the fatalities in 2023 involved speeding, and Virginia's proportion of speeding-related fatalities is significantly higher than the national average of 29 percent.[3] In addition, Virginia incurs approximately $6.5 billion in economic harm annually due to motor vehicle crashes, which is equivalent to a "crash tax" of $756 per resident each year according to a 2019 analysis.[4] When updated for inflation alone, in 2026, costs would equate to over $8.3 billion.[5] Traffic safety is a serious and costly issue in urgent need of proven solutions.

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.[6] Speed increases also immensely impact pedestrians and other 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.[7] Further, drivers who speed have been shown to exhibit additional deadly driving behaviors; more than half (51 percent) of speeding passenger vehicle drivers in fatal crashes were unbuckled, compared to 23 percent of non-speeding drivers.[8]

Speed safety cameras are verified to deter speeding and its impact and are recommended for adoption by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), among others.[9] 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.[10] Similarly, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) found that automated speed enforcement reduces fatalities and injuries by 20-37 percent and is particularly effective in school and construction zones.[11] A study by Carnegie Mellon University of speed safety cameras in Philadelphia, PA found a 90 percent reduction in speeding and an approximately 50 percent decrease in crashes and injuries relative to the most similar arterials, all arterials and local roads in Philadelphia.[12] Furthermore, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Pub. L. 117-58) permits use of certain federal funds for automated enforcement programs in school and work zones.

In addition, we urge amending the bill to allow law enforcement agencies to use speed safety cameras in safety red zones without local governing bodies having to first enact an ordinance enabling law enforcement to do so. This amendment would harmonize the process for utilizing speed safety cameras in safety red zones with the process in school zones, work zones and high-risk intersection segments.

Law enforcement risk their lives when performing their duties every day. Yet, it is implausible for law enforcement officers to be everywhere and catch every violation. Speed safety cameras augment traditional enforcement without requiring a traffic stop and will improve safety.

Advocates urges you to upgrade and advance HB 994 to protect VRUs and others and save lives. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Catherine Chase, President

cc: Senate Committee on Transportation members

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1 Traffic Safety Facts: Crash Stats, Early Estimate of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities in 2024, NHTSA, April 2025, DOT HS 813 710, available at https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813710.

2 State Traffic Safety Information for Virginia, NHTSA, available at https://cdan.dot.gov/stsi.htm.

3 Traffic Safety Facts 2023 Data: Speeding, NHTSA, Jun. 2025, DOT HS 813 721, available at https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813721.

4 The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2019, NHTSA, Feb. 2023, DOT HS 813 403, available at https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813403.

5 CPI Inflation Calculator, BLS, Jan. 2019 to Jan. 2026, available at https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl.

6 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.

7 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.

8 Traffic Safety Facts 2021 Data: Speeding, NHTSA, Jul. 2023, DOT HS 813 473, available at https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813473.

9 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.

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

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

12 Evaluating the Effectiveness of Urban Speed Cameras on Traffic Safety in a Period of Dramatic Change, Carnegie Mellon University, July 2024, available at https://ppms.cit.cmu.edu/media/project_files/Guerra_Erick_420.pdf.