

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2001**

**SESSION LAW 2001-286
SENATE BILL 243**

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE CERTAIN MUNICIPALITIES TO USE TRAFFIC CONTROL PHOTOGRAPHIC SYSTEMS AND TO AUTHORIZE CERTAIN MUNICIPALITIES TO USE RED LIGHT CAMERAS FOR SAFETY, FOR SCHOOLS, BUT NOT FOR PROFIT.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Subsection (d) of G.S. 160A-300.1 reads as rewritten:

"(d) This ~~act~~ section applies only to the Cities of Albemarle, Charlotte, Durham, Fayetteville, Greensboro, High Point, Rocky Mount, Wilmington, Greenville, and Lumberton, and to the Towns of Chapel Hill, Cornelius, Huntersville, Matthews, Nags Head, and Pineville ~~Pineville,~~ and to the municipalities in Union County ~~only.~~"

SECTION 2. G.S. 160A-300.1 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

"(c1) The duration of the yellow light change interval at intersections where traffic control photographic systems are in use shall be no less than the yellow light change interval duration specified in the Design Manual developed by the Signals and Geometrics Section of the North Carolina Department of Transportation."

SECTION 3. Article 15 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

§ 160A-300.2. Use of traffic control photographic systems in Wake County.

(a) A traffic control photographic system is an electronic system consisting of a photographic, video, or electronic camera and a vehicle sensor installed to work in conjunction with an official traffic control device to automatically produce photographs, video, or digital images of each vehicle violating a standard traffic control statute or ordinance.

(b) Any traffic control photographic system or any device which is a part of that system, as described in subsection (a) of this section, installed on a street or highway which is a part of the State highway system shall meet requirements established by the North Carolina Department of Transportation. Any traffic control system installed on a municipal street shall meet standards established by the municipality and shall be consistent with any standards set by the Department of Transportation.

(c) Any traffic control photographic system installed on a street or highway shall be identified by appropriate advance warning signs conspicuously posted not more than 300 feet from the location of the traffic control photographic system. All advance warning signs shall be consistent with a statewide standard adopted by the Department of Transportation in conjunction with local governments authorized to install traffic control photographic systems.

(d) Municipalities may adopt ordinances for the civil enforcement of G.S. 20-158 by means of a traffic control photographic system, as described in subsection (a) of this section. If a municipality adopts an ordinance pursuant to this section then, notwithstanding G.S. 20-176, a violation of G.S. 20-158 detected only by a traffic control photographic system shall not be an infraction. If a violation of G.S. 20-158 is detected by both a law enforcement officer and a traffic control photographic system, the officer may charge the offender with an infraction. If the officer charges the offender with an infraction, a civil penalty issued by the municipality for the same

offense is void and unenforceable. An ordinance authorized by this subsection shall provide that:

(1) The owner of a vehicle shall be responsible for a violation unless the owner can furnish evidence that the vehicle was, at the time of the violation, in the care, custody, or control of another person. The owner of the vehicle shall not be responsible for the violation if the owner of the vehicle, within 21 days after receiving notification of the violation, furnishes the office of the mayor of the municipality that issued the citation:

a. The name and address of the person or company who leased, rented, or otherwise had the care, custody, and control of the vehicle;

b. An affidavit stating that the vehicle involved was, at the time, stolen or in the care, custody, or control of some person who did not have permission of the owner to use the vehicle; or

c. A statement that the person who received the citation is not the owner or driver of the vehicle, or that the person who received the citation was not driving a vehicle at the time and location designated in the citation.

(2) A violation detected by a traffic control photographic system shall be deemed a noncriminal violation for which a civil penalty of fifty dollars (\$50.00) shall be assessed and for which no points authorized by G.S. 20-16(c) shall be assigned to the owner or driver of the vehicle nor insurance points as authorized by G.S. 58-36-65.

(3) The owner of the vehicle shall be issued a citation that shall be attached to photographic evidence of the violation that identifies the vehicle involved. The citation shall clearly state the manner in which the violation may be challenged. The owner of the vehicle shall comply with the directions on the citation. The citation shall be processed by officials or agents of the municipality and shall be forwarded by personal service or first-class mail to the address given on the motor vehicle registration. If the owner fails to pay the civil penalty or to respond to the citation within the time period specified on the citation, the owner shall have waived the right to contest responsibility for the violation and shall be subject to a civil penalty not to exceed one hundred dollars (\$100.00). The municipality may establish procedures for the collection of these penalties and may enforce the penalties by civil action in the nature of debt.

(4) The municipality shall establish a nonjudicial administrative hearing process to review objections to citations or penalties issued or assessed under this section. The municipality may establish an appeals panel composed of municipal employees to review objections. If the municipality does not establish an appeals panel composed of municipal employees, the mayor of the municipality shall review and make a final decision on all objections.

(e) The duration of the yellow light change interval at intersections where traffic control photographic systems are in use shall be no less than the yellow light change interval duration specified in the Design Manual developed by the Signals and Geometrics Section of the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

(f) A municipality enacting an ordinance implementing a traffic control photographic system may enter into a contract with a contractor for the lease, lease-purchase, or purchase of the system. The municipality may enter into only one contract for the lease, lease-purchase, or purchase of the system and the duration of the contract may be for no more than 60 months. After the period specified in the contract has

expired, the system shall either be the property of the municipality or the system shall be removed and returned to the contractor.

(g) The clear proceeds from the citations issued pursuant to the ordinance authorized by this section shall be paid to the county school fund. The clear proceeds from the citations shall mean the funds remaining after paying for the lease, lease-purchase, or purchase of the traffic control photographic system; paying a contractor for operating the system; and paying any administrative costs incurred by the municipality related to the use of the system.

(h) This section applies only to the municipalities in Wake County. For purposes of this section, a municipality is in Wake County if fifty-one percent (51%) or more of the land area of the municipality lies within Wake County."

SECTION 4. Article 15 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 160A-300.3. Use of traffic control photographic systems in the City of Concord.

(a) A traffic control photographic system is an electronic system consisting of a photographic, video, or electronic camera and a vehicle sensor installed to work in conjunction with an official traffic control device to automatically produce photographs, video, or digital images of each vehicle violating a standard traffic control statute or ordinance.

(b) Any traffic control photographic system or any device which is a part of that system, as described in subdivision (a) of this section, installed on a street or highway which is a part of the State highway system shall meet requirements established by the North Carolina Department of Transportation. Any traffic control system installed on a municipal street shall meet standards established by the municipality and shall be consistent with any standards set by the Department of Transportation.

(c) Any traffic control photographic system installed on a street or highway must be identified by appropriate advance warning signs conspicuously posted not more than 300 feet from the location of the traffic control photographic system. All advance warning signs shall be consistent with a statewide standard adopted by the Department of Transportation in conjunction with local governments authorized to install traffic control photographic systems.

(d) Municipalities may adopt ordinances for the civil enforcement of G.S. 20-158 by means of a traffic control photographic system, as described in subsection (a) of this section. Notwithstanding the provisions of G.S. 20-176, in the event that a municipality adopts an ordinance pursuant to this section, a violation of G.S. 20-158 at a location at which a traffic control photographic system is in operation shall not be an infraction. An ordinance authorized by this subsection shall provide that:

(1) The owner of a vehicle shall be responsible for a violation unless the owner can furnish evidence that the vehicle was, at the time of the violation, in the care, custody, or control of another person. The owner of the vehicle shall not be responsible for the violation if the owner of the vehicle, within 21 days after notification of the violation, furnishes the officials or agents of the municipality which issued the citation:

a. The name and address of the person or company who leased, rented, or otherwise had the care, custody, and control of the vehicle; or

b. An affidavit stating that the vehicle involved was, at the time, stolen or in the care, custody, or control of some person who did not have permission of the owner to use the vehicle.

(2) A violation detected by a traffic control photographic system shall be deemed a noncriminal violation for which a civil penalty of fifty dollars (\$50.00) shall be assessed, and for which no points authorized by G.S. 20-16(c) shall be assigned to the owner or driver of the vehicle nor insurance points as authorized by G.S. 58-36-65.

- (3) The owner of the vehicle shall be issued a citation which shall clearly state the manner in which the violation may be challenged, and the owner shall comply with the directions on the citation. The citation shall be processed by officials or agents of the municipality and shall be forwarded by personal service or first-class mail to the address given on the motor vehicle registration. If the owner fails to pay the civil penalty or to respond to the citation within the time period specified on the citation, the owner shall have waived the right to contest responsibility for the violation, and shall be subject to a civil penalty not to exceed one hundred dollars (\$100.00). The municipality may establish procedures for the collection of these penalties and may enforce the penalties by civil action in the nature of debt.
- (4) The municipality shall institute a nonjudicial administrative hearing to review objections to citations or penalties issued or assessed under this section.

(e) The duration of the yellow light change interval at intersections where traffic control photographic systems are in use shall be no less than the yellow light change interval duration specified in the Design Manual developed by the Signals and Geometrics Section of the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

(f) The clear proceeds from the citations issued pursuant to the ordinance authorized by this section shall be paid to the county school fund. The clear proceeds from the citations shall mean the funds remaining after paying for the lease, lease-purchase, or purchase of the traffic control photographic system; paying a contractor for operating the system; and paying any administrative costs incurred by the municipality related to the use of the system.

(g) This section applies only to the City of Concord."

SECTION 5. This act is effective when it becomes law.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 4th day of July, 2001.

s/ Beverly E. Perdue
President of the Senate

s/ James B. Black
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ Michael F. Easley
Governor

Approved 9:59 a.m. this 13th day of July, 2001