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Testimony of Lt. Bruce Scott

NFNA LD 1457

Resolve, to Allow the Maine Turnpike Authority to Conduct a Pilot Program to Implement Automated Speed Control Systems in Highway Work Zones

Senator Nangle, Rep. Crafts, and distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, my name is Lt. Bruce Scott, and I am the Commanding Officer of the State Police Traffic Safety Unit. I am here today to testify on behalf of the Department of Public Safety and the Maine State Police NFNA LD 1457.

This resolve would allow the Maine Turnpike Authority to conduct a pilot program that would temporarily allow speed cameras to be used in construction zones on Maine's Highways. This would allow for the Maine Turnpike Authority to partner with the Maine Department of Transportation and Maine Department of Public Safety to

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administer this pilot. This resolve sunsets in 2028 thereby allowing enough time to properly evaluate the pilot and to make recommendations back to the legislature, while ensuring that the practice cannot be continued without a new law allowing for implementation.

Many states already allow for speed enforcement cameras and have seen speed reductions of 5–6 MPH, and crash reductions up to 47% in areas where these systems are in place.

This resolve puts numerous safeguards in place to overcome the shortcomings of previous unsuccessful bills that this committee has heard in the past. Violations must be confirmed by a sworn member or authorized member of the Maine Department of Public Safety prior to the issuance of a ticket, points cannot assessed against a person's driving record, insurance premium rates cannot be affected, it requires a warning for a first offense, sets minimum speed of 11 over the speed limit before a summons may be issued, requires signage to warn motorists, requires daily confirmation that the radar unit is functioning properly with daily calibration tests, doesn't allow the vendor to dictate resolutions, etc....

The Department of Public Safety has witnessed first-hand the devastation caused by careless drivers speeding through construction zones and we have been in search of viable solutions for decades to change careless driving behavior and mitigate the dangers of all who enter these zones. It is time that we admitted that the barriers we face in making an appreciable difference in safety within work zones have not been overcome in a meaningful way. Many attempts have been made to effectively reduce the speed of motor vehicles in work zones and despite our best concerted efforts, we have

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fallen short. We have learned that the consistent enforcement of the law has the best effect on driving behavior. Having a cruiser with its blue lights on in work zones has proven to be reliable as long as we remain present. However, with limited resources and competing duties we cannot maintain a constant presence in all work zones, at all times when workers are present.

Leveraging technology and using this as a force multiplier may just be the solution needed. We recognize that we can't do it alone, so partnering with the MTA and the DOT may be exactly what we need to get over the hurdles that have prevented the use of speed enforcement cameras in the past. Admittedly, the State Police may not have adequate resources at this time to provide our share of personnel to review all the violations that occur daily in three different work zones. So, while this is very important, we fear pulling troopers off the road to verify these traffic violations may diminish our visible presence and not have the desired effect on overall road safety. As we continue to fill our roster and graduate more recruits from our training academy this pilot may get easier to staff.

For these reasons, we are Neither for Nor Against LD 1457.

On behalf of the Department of Public Safety and the Maine State Police, I thank you for your time and would be happy to try and answer any questions that you might have.

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