

In Support of LD 1457

“An Act To Establish a Pilot Program for Speed Safety Cameras in Highway Work Zones”

Good afternoon Senator Nangle and Representative Crafts and, members of the Transportation Committee.

My name is Gerald Ouellette. I have been an Employee of the Maine Turnpike Authority for 27 years. I started my career in the Construction field prior to coming to the Authority. I am here to support LD 1457 Establishing a 3 year Pilot Program to deploy speed safety cameras in selected Highway work zones.

When I came to the Authority, I never realized how fast the traveling public were in relation to the Work Zones needed to perform daily tasks. I started in Highway Maintenance where I received proper training to install and maintain Work Zones. This training did not prepare me for the experiences I have seen over the last 27 years.

We see it on a daily basis how inconsiderate some people can be speeding through Work Zones knowing we are only feet away from not going home at night.

I have seen many close calls and some that caused not only property damage but physical damage to themselves and other innocent people.

In 2001, I moved into the Engineering Department overseeing Construction projects working side by side with the Contractor. I worked mainly with Contractors repaving sections of the Highway on an annual cycle. This work requires equipment and personnel to be even closer to the traveling public in Work Zones due to the limits needed to perform the work. We have no choice to be in such vulnerable situations. We take every precaution that we can to stay safe.

One day while paving in a Work Zone I witnessed a speeding vehicle enter the Work Zone striking the first roller behind the paver. While no one in the crew was hurt, the driver did not survive his injuries. The only positive note from this incident was that nobody in the Work Zone was injured. If the vehicle had entered only feet further, it would have struck the paver where three men were

standing operating the paver. If he would have slowed down, maybe he would have been able to control his vehicle.

On another occasion, I witnessed an employee of a Contractor get hit by a passing speeding patron. He was setting up a Lane Closure and Work Zone. He was crossing the Highway to install an advanced warning sign prior to the closure. The speeding vehicle struck him throwing him and the sign into the air. He was very Lucky that he only sustained broken bones and was able to live and return to his family.

There are so many stories that can be said and so many close calls that “We as Workers” take as WARNINGS. We need this bill as another tool to help slow people down and be aware of the dangers around them. We need this to not only protect the workers in the Work Zone, But also the traveling public that obeys the posted Work Zone speed limits.

Thank you for allowing me to speak in front of you today. We all just want to go home safely every night.