



April 23, 2025

Testimony of Andre Briere, Maine Turnpike Authority  
Before the 132nd Legislature, Joint Standing Committee on Transportation

### In Support of LD 1457

## **An Act To Establish a Pilot Program for Speed Safety Cameras in Highway Work Zones**

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Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, distinguished members of the committee, my name is Andre Briere and I am the executive director for Maine Turnpike Authority (MTA). I'm here today to testify in strong support of LD 1457, which would establish a carefully limited, three-year pilot program to deploy speed safety cameras in selected highway work zones.

At its core, LD 1457 is about protecting lives—those of the men and women working on our highways, the state troopers who keep our roads safe, and the drivers and passengers who pass through work zones every day. The goals of the pilot are clear and compelling:

- Reduce speeds in work zones
- Improve driver behavior
- Save worker and traveler lives
- Complement—not replace—existing enforcement
- Promote a culture of work zone safety

We believe this bill is a vital addition to the toolkit of strategies already used to protect highway workers: from intelligent transportation systems to positive protection devices, from detailed traffic control plans to work zone safety training. But when it comes to speed and distracted driving, signage and cones alone are not enough.

The data speaks volumes. Between 2011 and 2023, Maine experienced over 7,100 work zone crashes, with 23 fatalities and 145 serious injuries. Too often, drivers do not slow down—even when it's clear that people are working just feet from live traffic.

LD 1457 proposes a modest, reasonable step to address this danger. Camera enforcement in no more than three work zones would be permitted statewide at any one time. They could only be deployed on controlled-access highways—such as the Turnpike—where the posted work zone speed is 50 MPH or more. Enforcement would only apply to drivers exceeding the limit by more than 11 miles per hour, and as currently drafted, first offenses would receive a written warning. We are also recommending a 90-day pre-enforcement period, during which only warnings would be issued. As part of this program, no insurance points or license penalties would ever be assessed...just a message: this behavior is unacceptable, and it must change.

Nineteen other states have recognized the value of this model and are seeing tremendous success. Maryland has had a program in place for 15 years. Since it began, average speeds in work zones have gone down—and the number of drivers speeding egregiously has dropped dramatically. In Pennsylvania and Delaware, work zone crashes fell by nearly half after speed safety cameras were introduced. The U.S. Department of Transportation says that on average, camera enforcement in work zones can be expected to reduce injury

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crashes by up to 48%. The correlation is clear: when enforcement is present, violations decline—and so do crashes.

This is not about revenue. It's not about surveillance. It's about safety—and LD 1457 contains strict safeguards to ensure it stays that way. The MTA will not receive any revenue from this program. Images of license plates only are reviewed by trained public safety personnel, not AI. Personal data is never sold or shared. All equipment is independently certified. Most importantly for those who may have privacy or other concerns, the Legislature has the opportunity to end the program after this pilot project in 2028. But based on the experience of our sister states in the Northeast, this is about as close to a guaranteed outcome as it is possible to get in the Transportation sector. Every single state that has implemented automated work zone enforcement has seen tremendous success and dramatically improved safety outcomes.

The Turnpike Authority is committed to doing everything we can to keep our work zones safe. That means continuing to invest in barriers, training, signage, and public outreach. But it also means recognizing where new tools—like automated enforcement—can save lives. My daily mission at MTA is to make sure that we don't add a single name to our memorial wall...to ensure that every highway worker and State Police trooper returns to their family after every shift. I would argue that there is no higher calling for those of us in public service than to preserve the lives of our fellow citizens if it is in our power to do so...this bill does that.

Later on, you will hear testimony from a highway maintenance supervisor and an engineering inspector about the need for safety in work zones.

I urge the Committee to support LD 1457, help Maine take this important step forward in work zone safety, and save the lives of our highway workers and state troopers. Thank you for your time, and I'd be happy to answer any questions.