



Testimony in Opposition to 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, Representative Crafts, and the distinguished members of the Committee on Transportation, my name is Harris Van Pate, and I serve as a policy analyst for Maine Policy Institute. Maine Policy is a free-market think tank, a nonpartisan, non-profit organization that advocates for individual liberty and economic freedom in Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to LD 1457.

LD 1457 proposes implementing a pilot program for automated speed enforcement in highway work zones. While we fully support efforts to improve road safety, this legislation raises serious concerns about cost, privacy, fairness, and accountability that outweigh its potential benefits.

Cost and Efficiency Concerns

At a time when Maine faces pressing infrastructure and budgetary challenges, allocating resources to expensive, unproven surveillance systems is not a prudent investment. These systems require initial installation, long-term maintenance, operator training, and data management. The resolution allows for contracts with private vendors, whose services often come with high fees, sometimes structured to incentivize more fines rather than safer roads.

States and municipalities implementing similar programs have found them to be revenue-driven rather than safety-driven. Maine taxpayers should not be asked to bankroll costly surveillance systems when simpler, less invasive, and more effective solutions, such as improved signage, better lighting, and more targeted law enforcement patrolling during high-risk construction periods, may be available.

Unwarranted Surveillance and Erosion of Privacy

LD 1457 authorizes the collection of recorded images of license plates, time, location, and vehicle information. While the bill includes language prohibiting use “for any surveillance purpose,” it still permits collecting and retaining personally identifiable information (PII), including travel direction and vehicle owner data.

This introduces a precedent for automated government surveillance of ordinary Mainers under the guise of safety, especially troubling when the surveillance is tied to civil penalties. The risk of misuse or data breaches is real, and we must ask: Is this level of



surveillance justified for a traffic enforcement pilot? Maine people are rightly skeptical of government overreach, and we urge lawmakers to err on the side of protecting civil liberties.

Targeting Due to Inaccurate Work Zone Signage

Targeting work zones specifically for this program would be unfair in the context of Maine’s chronic failure to manage work zone signage properly. Investigative reports by WGME in 2024 and 2025 highlighted how construction zone signs often remain up long after work has concluded, leading to confusion and inappropriate/uneven speed limit enforcement:

- A 2024 WGME report commented on abandoned construction signs on Route 302 remaining on roads near Westbrook.¹
- A 2025 WGME follow-up posed the question: “Do you have to obey reduced speed limits in work zones in Maine if no one is working?”—highlighting public frustration and confusion over unclear enforcement and outdated signage.²

Even under the bill’s definition of an “active construction work area...with workers present,” confusion will persist when signage does not reflect reality. Until Maine has a reliable, responsive system for removing or updating work zone signage, implementing automated fines based on such zones would be fundamentally unjust.

Conclusion

Maine Policy Institute opposes LD 1457 because it paves the way for costly and intrusive surveillance in the name of traffic enforcement. It does so without solving the underlying problems that compromise safety in our work zones—inconsistent signage and inadequate roadwork communication.

Instead of investing in automated enforcement, we urge the Legislature to focus on proven strategies: improving the clarity and timeliness of work zone signage, ensuring enforcement is done by trained officers when necessary, and exploring low-cost safety measures that do not threaten privacy or fairness. For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to reject LD 1457. Thank you for your time and consideration.

¹

<https://wgme.com/news/i-team/abandoned-construction-signs-dated-signs-on-route-302-to-stay-up-in-westbrook-maine-road-work-projects-drivers-safety-signalized-crosswalk>

²

<https://wgme.com/news/i-team/do-you-have-to-obey-reduced-speed-limits-in-work-zones-in-maine-if-no-one-is-working-construction-mainedot-maine-state-police-crashes-crash-road-safety>