



Senate OKs Electronic Speed Enforcement In Some Highway Work Zones

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The Senate approved bills today 21-14 allowing electronic speed enforcement sensors, capable of picking up vehicles' registration plates, to be installed in construction zones.

Rep. [Will SNYDER \(D-Muskegon\)](#)'s [HB 4132](#) and Rep. [Mike MUELLER \(R-Linden\)](#)'s [HB 4133](#) permit the Michigan Department of Transportation to install no more than four automated speed enforcement systems in a region, using them in work zones where construction is not separated from traffic by concrete barriers.

Both bills were opposed by Sens. [Thomas ALBERT \(R-Lowell\)](#), [Rosemary BAYER \(D-Keego Harbor\)](#), [Jon BUMSTEAD \(R-North Muskegon\)](#), [Mary CAVANAGH \(D-Redford Twp.\)](#), [Roger HAUCK \(R-Union Twp.\)](#), [Michele HOITENGA \(R-Manton\)](#), [Ruth JOHNSON \(R-Holly\)](#), [Jonathan LINDSEY \(R-Brooklyn\)](#), [Ed MCBROOM \(R-Waucedah Twp.\)](#), [Jeremy MOSS \(D-Southfield\)](#), [Aric NESBITT \(R-Lawton\)](#), [Rick OUTMAN \(R-Six Lakes\)](#), [Jim RUNESTAD \(R-White Lake\)](#) and [Lana THEIS \(R-Brighton\)](#).

Sens. [John DAMOOSE \(R-Harbor Springs\)](#), [Mark HUIZENGA \(R-Walker\)](#), [Roger VICTORY \(R-Hudsonville\)](#) and [Michael WEBBER \(R-Rochester Hills\)](#) joined most Democratic caucus members in supporting the bills.

"I have a lot of compassion for accidents that happen within construction zones. I want them to be safe. I want them to be safe for the workers. I want them to be safe for commuters," Moss said. "I am, though, uncomfortable with this approach of expanding policing authority to a non-policing state department."

Moss said he believes speed enforcement through surveillance leaves concerns about tickets being issued to a car's owner rather than the offending driver, as well as worries of tickets being incorrectly issued and the burden placed on a resident to correct that.

On the Republican side, Damoose said he doesn't see today's bills as a slippery slope. He illustrated drives he made from Northern Michigan to Washington, D.C., commuting through Maryland where there's automated speed enforcement for the state's own highway work zones.

Beginning on June 1 of this year, drivers in [Maryland](#) could face an \$80 fine for driving 12 miles per hour or more over the speed limit in a designated area.

"There was a big giant sign right on the camera saying photo enforcement, and I can tell you that every single car was going . . . 50 miles an hour, not 51," Damoose said. "The minute I got through that work zone, we put the hammer down, and I won't tell you how fast because

I did ask (that) my remarks be printed in the journal. But it was fast."

He said he's seen the effort work, and while he would never support using cameras for routine speed enforcement, "if we care about these laborers, we have to be willing to do more than just put up signs that say 'bring them back alive.'"

If a motorist travels more than 10 miles per hour over the speed limit in a monitored work zone, they will receive a written warning for their first violation.

For their second violation in less than three years after their last warning, a driver could face a \$150 civil infraction. For a third violation in less than three years afterward, they would face a \$300 civil infraction.

Under the bills, drivers must be made aware of the systems, with signs placed one mile ahead of the monitored work zone, clarifying the area is being surveilled. Additionally, a digital display must be placed on or near the system, informing drivers of their speed as they approach (See "[House Speeds Through Work Zone Traffic Enforcement](#)," 6/22/2023).

MDOT would be expected to prioritize placing sensors in areas where a work zone is located on a freeway with a 45 miles-per-hour speed limit, as well as where the work zone will be active for at least 30 days. They would also need to prioritize work zones where "workers are exposed," or where there are traffic hazards like closed shoulders, lane splits or rough pavement.

According to [Michigan's Office of Highway Safety Planning](#), there were 8,017 work zone crashes and 24 work zone fatalities last year alone.