

Date of Hearing: March 14, 2016

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Jim Frazier, Chair

AB 1725 (Wagner) – As Amended March 7, 2016

SUBJECT: Vehicles: automated traffic enforcement systems

SUMMARY: Explicitly provides that traffic control signals at places other than an intersection, including freeway or highway on ramps, must be obeyed.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Authorizes the California Department of Transportation to erect any traffic control signal or other official traffic control device on any state highway.
- 2) Makes it generally unlawful for any driver to fail to obey any sign, signal, or other traffic control device. Violations carry a base fine of \$35.
- 3) Makes it unlawful to fail to stop a red light at an intersection. Because of the potential severity of crashes resulting from failing to stop at an intersection, the base fine for violations of this provision is \$100.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: According to the author, this bill is intended to ensure that failing to stop at a ramp meter does not carry the same penalty as the justifiably higher fine for the far more dangerous act of running a red light through an intersection.

The base fine for most traffic violations is \$35 and the total penalty, with court fees and surcharges, can range from about \$250 to nearly \$300, depending on the county in which the violation occurred. Fines for more egregious violations, such as running a red light, carry a \$100 base fine, with total costs amounting to nearly \$500.

It is unclear how pervasive the problem is that this bill attempts to remedy—that is, how often a driver is cited with a violation for running a red light at an intersection when the red light was actually at a freeway on ramp. The author's office could offer only minimal anecdotal evidence that the problem exists. (According to the California Highway Patrol, its officers are trained to cite the lesser violation of ignoring traffic control devices at places other than an intersection when citing a driver for failing to stop at a freeway ramp meter.) To the extent that there is ambiguity in the field as to which code provision should be cited for failing to stop at a ramp meter, this bill will provide clarification.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Conference of California Bar Associations
Safer Streets L.A.

Opposition

None on file

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