

July 16, 2019

Members of the Suffolk County Legislature

William H. Rogers Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown NY 11787

RE: Red Light Camera "Traffic Safety" Program – Proposed Extension

I write this letter in opposition to any proposed extension of the Red Light Camera "Traffic Safety" Program.

In my opinion, the Red Light Camera program is a revenue-inspired abuse of the driving public. I believe that the vast majority of residents of Suffolk County oppose these traffic signal cameras and view it as a form of taxation on the driving public – a "scam," a "ticketing scheme" and the high fines/fees unfairly negatively impact those who are of limited financial means. It seems to me that this was always about revenue generation and never about traffic safety improvements. For Suffolk County, this program has clearly generated substantial money to help balance the budget and for the profit motivations of the red light camera vendors involved.

It appears that more accidents are occurring because of these red light cameras, particularly with drivers now slamming on the brakes on yellow lights out of fear of receiving more tickets by mail and resulting in more rear-end collisions. I know from my own personal experience when traveling in Brookhaven Township and other points in western Suffolk that I also navigate intersections with a heightened sense of fear that there is a red light camera ready to snap a photo and a costly ticket to arrive in the mail, thus braking on yellow lights in an overcautious way so to not turn right on stale yellow, that the ticket will say was a red light violation.

Traffic enforcement of moving violations and improper driving behavior is a duty of law enforcement. An offense based upon a recorded image produced by a photographic traffic signal enforcement system that shows only the vehicle and its license plate and does not even show the actual driver that allegedly committed the violation is simply wrong. Moreover, the administrative fees attached to the violation are highly questionable. I also believe that for most "violations" issued – if the incident were witnessed by a police officer, they would not issue a ticket to the motorist, for example, for those who stopped for a few moments, determined that it was safe to turn right on red, but did not stop for a full 5 seconds, or who turned left on a stale yellow light.

Further, if traffic signal timing is being tinkered with so as to attempt to shorten durations to allow turning movements in an effort to generate more revenue for the County, that is outrageous and contrary to the duty to protect the public's best interests for safety on our roadways.

If, after these hearings and your due deliberation, you are inclined to continue the program due to the significant amount of revenue that is generated to have cover ever-increasing expenditures in the Suffolk County Operational Budget, please do not attempt to extend any red light cameras into localities out east on the South Fork onto County roads. As a former elected official who has worked in local government for 14 years and has the community's pulse and best interests in mind at all times, I assure you that we do NOT want red light cameras in the Hamptons.

I believe that Suffolk County Officials also should admit that this program was always about revenue generation to support the county's budget and was never about traffic safety improvements, thus not calling the program a "Traffic Safety Program." It would be false and disingenuous to include narrative in the "Whereas" clauses of the resolution to cite safety reasons as the predominant reason for re-authorizing this program.

On behalf of the silent majority who cannot attend hearings due to busy lives and work schedules, please vote to discontinue this abusive program.

Sincerely,

Linda Kabot, Resident / Taxpayer / Community Advocate and Candidate for Suffolk County Legislator, LD#2
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