

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 614
By: Quintanilla
Urban Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Currently, the State of Texas has no regulatory legislation which provides for the operations of red light cameras. At intersections that include state highways, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) oversees the operations of any traffic signal signs or lights. TxDOT follows the rules established by the Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for traffic light intervals. In addition, the engineering practices for determining the duration of yellow change and red clearance intervals are found in International Transportation Engineers' (ITE's) "Traffic Control Devices Handbook" and in ITE's "Manual of Traffic Signal Design." The use of these standards by the Texas Department of Transportation provides the driving public with standard intervals at all traffic light locations which control intersections with state roads. In addition, TxDOT requires municipalities to observe these same standards when erecting traffic signal lights at intersections which include state highways. In this way the public will not have a different interval at different locations where the speed limit and elevation grade are similar.

House Bill No. 614 requires that all intersections which monitor traffic with red light cameras follow the rules established by the Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic so that motorists have uniform expectations for the yellow light intervals.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a State officer, department, agency, or institution.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Would amend Chapter 544 of the Transportation Code by adding Section 544.013(a) to provide the definition of a "photographic traffic monitoring system" to mean one that consists of a camera and vehicle sensor installed to work in conjunction with an electrically operated traffic-control signal and that it is capable of producing one or more recorded images that depict the license plate attached to the rear of a motor vehicle that is not operated in compliance with the instructions of the traffic-control signal. Further, a "recorded image" means an image that depicts the rear of a motor vehicle and is automatically recorded on a photograph or digital image.

Section 544.013 (b) states that an intersection at which a photographic traffic monitoring system is in use, the minimum change interval for a steady yellow signal must be established in accordance with the Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

SECTION 2. This Act would take effect September 1, 2007.

EFFECTIVE DATE

The effective date is September 1, 2007, or immediately, if approved by two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution.