



[SF 489](#) – Traffic Cameras (LSB2506SV)

Staff Contact: Maria Wagenhofer (515.281.5270) maria.wagenhofer@legis.iowa.gov

Fiscal Note Version – New

Description

[Senate File 489](#) regulates the use of automated or remote systems for traffic law enforcement (ATE system). “Automated or remote system for traffic law enforcement” is defined in the Bill as a camera or other optical device designed to work in conjunction with an official traffic control signal or speed measuring device to identify motor vehicles operating in violation of traffic laws, the use of which results in the issuance of citations sent through the mail or by electronic means. The Bill provides that local authorities must hold a valid permit from the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) before using an ATE system. The DOT is authorized to determine whether a system is appropriate and necessary and the least restrictive means to address the traffic safety issues at a location. The Bill details a list of requirements that must be included in an application for a permit.

Local authorities are only authorized to use an ATE system for the following violations:

- Failure to yield or stop at an intersection controlled by a traffic-controlled signal.
- Failure to yield or stop at a railroad crossing.
- Exceeding the speed limit by more than 10 miles per hour.

Local authorities may only issue warnings for violations detected by a mobile system. Local authorities must have permanent signs giving notice of the systems at least 500 feet but not more than 1,000 feet along the approach of a highway where a system is used. These signs must be erected at least 30 days before a system enforces violations. The Bill requires a local authority to submit to the DOT and post on the local authority’s Internet site an annual report that details the number of traffic collisions and accidents, the number of citations issued, and any other relevant information about the location where a system is in use. The Bill also provides requirements for the installation and maintenance of an ATE system, including the requirement for a monthly calibration of a system.

Local authorities are required to review and approve a recorded photograph or video of a violation captured by a system before a citation is issued. With the exception of excessive speed violations, scheduled fines must not exceed the amounts under Iowa Code section [805.8A](#). For excessive speed violations detected by a system, the citation amount must not exceed \$50 for speeds between 10 miles and 20 miles per hour over the limit, \$75 for speeds between 20 miles and 30 miles per hour over the limit, and \$250 for speeds greater than 30 miles per hour over the limit. These amounts are doubled if the violation occurred in a road work zone.

Senate File 489 requires the local authority to remit 10.0% of moneys collected, minus the installation and maintenance costs of the system itself, to the Road Use Tax Fund (RUTF).

If a local authority currently uses an ATE system, the Bill requires the local authority to submit a list of the system locations and justifications for the ATE system as required under the Bill to the

DOT by April 1, 2023. The DOT may issue a permit to the local authority. If a local authority does not receive a permit from the DOT by July 1, 2023, the local authority must cease operating an ATE system. If a local authority uses an ATE system for the first time on or after April 1, 2023, the DOT must not issue the local authority a permit before July 1, 2025. Division II related to existing systems takes effect upon enactment.

Background

As of March 2022, the Legislative Services Agency (LSA) is aware of 19 cities and towns in Iowa that operate an ATE system or systems, including Sioux City, Cedar Rapids, Davenport, Muscatine, Fort Dodge, Council Bluffs, Des Moines, Waterloo, Fayette, West Union, LeClaire, Strawberry Point, Hudson, Chester, Buffalo, Bellevue, Miles, Independence, and Oelwein. Data is not available at this time regarding the use of ATE systems in additional cities or towns. As of March 10, 2023, the LSA obtained data from Cedar Rapids, Council Bluffs, Davenport, Des Moines, LeClaire, Muscatine, and Sioux City regarding their current ATE systems. Oelwein and Hudson recently implemented ATE systems and do not have a full year of data. **Table 1** provides data obtained by the LSA on the number of ATE systems, base cost per violation, vendors’ share of revenues, and local authorities’ share of revenues for the last full fiscal year.

Table 1 — FY 2022 Estimated Violations and Revenues from ATE Systems

Local Authority	Number of Mobile ATEs	Total Number of Operating ATEs	Number of Violations Issued	Number of Violations Collected	Base Fine Per Violation*	Vendor Revenue	Local Authority Revenue
Cedar Rapids	2	19	187,575	108,557	\$ 75	\$2,439,845	\$ 8,307,136
Council Bluffs	0	15	17,059	10,083	100	381,482	712,696
Davenport	4	18	43,327	21,357	65	647,671	1,720,046
Des Moines	2	11	116,918	76,960	65	1,735,109	3,267,303
LeClaire	1	5	79,922	69,341	50	2,323,790	2,428,840
Muscatine	1	9	12,177 **	7,590	75	208,224	474,695
Sioux City	2	9	9,775	4,038	100	264,240	169,376

* Lowest violation amount. Actual violation amounts may increase depending on miles over the legal speed limit.
 ** Figures provided for Calendar Year 2022.
 Source: Local authorities

The RUTF is the primary source of funding for construction, maintenance, and administration of Iowa’s highways. RUTF revenue is collected by the State Treasurer and distributed to the DOT, counties, and cities by formula. Currently, 47.5% is allocated to the DOT for primary roads, 24.5% to counties for secondary roads, 8.0% to counties for farm-to-market roads, and 20.0% to cities, after other distributions and appropriations are taken off the top.

Assumptions

- Many local jurisdictions will be required to reduce the amount of a single citation for speeding violations as provided in the Bill. For the purposes of this **Fiscal Note**, it is estimated that revenue collected by local authorities would decrease by 25.0% as a result of the lower violation amounts.
- It is assumed that the local authority revenue collected annually by mobile units equals the number of mobile ATE systems that a local authority has as a percentage of the total number of operating ATE systems.
- Installation and maintenance costs of an ATE system is assumed to include the vendor costs. Therefore, the 10.0% of moneys collected is applied only to the local authority revenue.
- For the purposes of this **Fiscal Note**, it is assumed that all cameras currently in operation and on which the LSA has collected data will be authorized to continue in operation.

Fiscal Impact

Senate File 489 is estimated to decrease revenue to local authorities. The full fiscal impact of the Bill cannot be estimated. However, **Table 2** includes estimates for the seven cities that provided data to the LSA. **Table 3** shows each city’s use of ATE system revenue.

Table 2 — Estimated Annual Loss in Revenue to Local Authorities as Compared to FY 2022

Local Authority	Estimated Loss of Revenue
Cedar Rapids	\$ -3,290,000
Council Bluffs	-232,000
Davenport	-817,000
Des Moines	-1,463,000
LeClaire	-1,117,000
Muscatine	-190,000
Sioux City	-80,000

Table 3 — Local Uses of ATE Systems Revenue

Local Authority	Uses
Cedar Rapids	Public safety positions, equipment, and programs
Council Bluffs	General Fund
Davenport	General Fund
Des Moines	Des Moines Public Safety Radio System and Iowa Statewide Interoperable Communications System
Le Claire	General Fund
Muscatine	Police department personnel costs
Sioux City	Public safety expenses

Senate File 489 is also estimated to increase revenue to the RUTF. For the seven cities that provided data to the LSA, the RUTF is estimated to have an annual increase of approximately \$1.1 million. However, the full fiscal impact to the RUTF from all localities cannot be estimated at this time.

Sources

Department of Transportation
Local authorities
LSA analysis and calculations

/s/ Jennifer Acton

March 21, 2023

Doc ID 1370436

The fiscal note for this Bill was prepared pursuant to [Joint Rule 17](#) and the Iowa Code. Data used in developing this fiscal note is available from the Fiscal Services Division of the Legislative Services Agency upon request.
