



NYPIRG

Straphangers Campaign

A project of the New York Public Interest Research Group

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Memo in Support: A. 10201 (Bing)/S. 7735 (Dilan) New York City Bus Lane Camera Enforcement

AN ACT to amend the vehicle and traffic law and the public officers law, in relation to establishing in a city with a population of one million or more a bus lane demonstration program to enforce restrictions on the use of bus lanes by means of bus lane photo devices; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof.

SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS: This bill would amend state law to allow New York City or the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to enforce 50 miles of bus lanes with the use of cameras, either stationary or mobile. The legislation requires that bus-mounted cameras be pointed outward and has provisions making any photos inadmissible in a disciplinary proceeding of a bus operator. Other safeguards protect the privacy of motor vehicle drivers and passengers. A fine for violating a bus lane shall not exceed \$115.

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT: New York City has the slowest buses in the nation. In congested areas, buses are slower than walking. Not surprisingly, Manhattan buses have the slowest speeds, crawling at an abysmal average of 5.5 mph. But slow routes can be found throughout the city.

Cameras mean faster speeds because they provide the kind of sustained enforcement that episodic waves of law personnel cannot. Look at London: In 1997, the city had one of the largest municipal bus systems in the world, with 6,500 buses carrying 5.1 million passengers daily. But 16,000 motorists were driving in bus priority lanes each day, slowing buses. So in 1997, London started a bus lane enforcement camera program in which cameras took pictures of the license plates of motorists driving in the bus lane... Today, 900 cameras on buses and 500 roadside cameras patrol the city's bus lanes. The program pays for itself and commuters are now saving an average of 10 minutes in travel time. Bus use is up 7% and reliability 12.5%.

The MTA has identified six bus lane "hot spots" where it would use cameras if authorized by the State:

- Lexington Avenue between 57th and 72nd Street;
- Madison Avenue between 42nd Street and 59th Street;
- Third Avenue between 42nd and 56th Street;
- Livingston Street between Flatbush and Boerum Places in Brooklyn;
- Archer Avenue between 150th Street and 160th Street in Queens; and
- Jamaica Avenue between Parsons Boulevard and 168th Street

FISCAL IMPACT: Unknown for this pilot, but likely revenue neutral.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The act takes effect 30 days after passage. It would sunset after seven years.