

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
1997 SESSION

S.L. 1997-216
SENATE BILL 741

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO USE PHOTOGRAPHIC
IMAGES AS PRIMA FACIE EVIDENCE OF A TRAFFIC VIOLATION.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. Chapter 160A of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 160A-300.1. Use of traffic control photographic systems.

(a) A traffic control photographic system is an electronic system consisting of a photographic, video, or electronic camera and a vehicle sensor installed to work in conjunction with an official traffic control device to automatically produce photographs, video, or digital images of each vehicle violating a standard traffic control statute or ordinance.

(b) Any traffic control photographic system or any device which is a part of that system, as described in subdivision (a) of this section, installed on a street or highway which is a part of the State highway system shall meet requirements established by the North Carolina Department of Transportation. Any traffic control system installed on a municipal street shall meet standards established by the municipality and shall be consistent with any standards set by the Department of Transportation.

(c) Municipalities may adopt ordinances for the civil enforcement of G.S. 20-158 by means of a traffic control photographic system, as described in subsection (a) of this section. Notwithstanding the provisions of G.S. 20-176, in the event that a municipality adopts an ordinance pursuant to this section, a violation of G.S. 20-158 at a location at which a traffic control photographic system is in operation shall not be an infraction. An ordinance authorized by this subsection shall provide that:

- (1) The owner of a vehicle shall be responsible for a violation unless the owner can furnish evidence that the vehicle was, at the time of the violation, in the care, custody, or control of another person. The owner of the vehicle shall not be responsible for the violation if the owner of the vehicle, within 21 days after notification of the violation, furnishes the officials or agents of the municipality which issued the citation:
 - a. The name and address of the person or company who leased, rented, or otherwise had the care, custody, and control of the vehicle; or

- b. An affidavit stating that the vehicle involved was, at the time, stolen or in the care, custody, or control of some person who did not have permission of the owner to use the vehicle.
- (2) A violation detected by a traffic control photographic system shall be deemed a noncriminal violation for which a civil penalty of fifty dollars (\$50.00) shall be assessed, and for which no points authorized by G.S. 20-16(c) shall be assigned to the owner or driver of the vehicle.
- (3) The owner of the vehicle shall be issued a citation which shall clearly state the manner in which the violation may be challenged, and the owner shall comply with the directions on the citation. The citation shall be processed by officials or agents of the municipality and shall be forwarded by personal service or first-class mail to the address given on the motor vehicle registration. If the owner fails to pay the civil penalty or to respond to the citation within the time period specified on the citation, the owner shall have waived the right to contest responsibility for the violation, and shall be subject to a civil penalty not to exceed one hundred dollars (\$100.00). The municipality may establish procedures for the collection of these penalties and may enforce the penalties by civil action in the nature of debt.
- (4) The municipality shall institute a nonjudicial administrative hearing to review objections to citations or penalties issued or assessed under this section."

Section 2. This act applies to the City of Charlotte only.

Section 3. This act is effective when it becomes law.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 23rd day of June, 1997.

s/ Dennis A. Wicker
President of the Senate

s/ Harold J. Brubaker
Speaker of the House of Representatives