

EXHIBIT NO. 17

DATE: 3/24/09

BILL NO. HB531

Pedestrian and Traffic Safety

Created by, Responsible to, and Sponsored by

The City of Bozeman, County of Gallatin, and School District 7

Mailing Address: c/o County Commissioners' Office, 311 West

Ralph W. Zimmer, Chairperson, (406) 586-

Gary Vodehnal, Vice Chairperson

March 23, 2009

Members

Highways and Transportation Committee

Montana State Senate

Helena, Montana 59620

Dear Senators:

The Bozeman Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Committee (PTS) opposes HB 531 and urges you to defeat it. That bill would arbitrarily, unnecessarily, and unwisely outlaw the use of red-light running cameras as part of a comprehensive traffic safety program. We are convinced the red-light camera program would make a significant contribution to traffic safety not just for defenseless pedestrians and crossing vehicles.

Our committee was jointly created by the City of Bozeman, The County of Gallatin, and School District 7 and advises them on pedestrian safety and traffic safety matters. Each of those three bodies appoints members to the committee (I was appointed by our all-Republican County Commission).

While we recognize that the best we could hope for is a relatively small decrease in the number of crashes, the type of crashes that would be reduced are often very severe (e.g., fatalities and personal injuries).

Last October we urged the Bozeman City Commission to launch a red-light camera program. In recent weeks, there have been allegations that the City's motivation is to generate additional revenue. That was not part of our committee's deliberations. I do not remember the words "revenue" or "income" being even mentioned during our deliberations.

From our perspective, a red-light camera program is fully justifiable as a safety program fully in line with the governmental obligation to maintain the public health, welfare, and safety. It is irrelevant if the City makes money in the process. It is irrelevant if the City has to subsidize it. It is reasonable and appropriate thing for the City to do.

Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Committee

Created by, Responsible to, and Serving

The City of Bozeman, County of Gallatin, and School District 7

Mailing Address: c/o County Commissioners' Office, 311 West Main, Bozeman MT 59715

Ralph W. Zimmer, Chairperson, (406) 586-9152

Gary Vodehnal, Vice Chairperson

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We suspect that the acquisition of a radar gun generates revenue far in excess of the price of the gun. That should not preclude local governments from acquiring radar guns.

Safety, not revenue or anything else, is the key issue. Protect the safety of all Montanans. Defeat HB 531!

Sincerely,

Ralph W. Zimmer, Chairperson

P.S. I wrote this letter so you would be aware of the committee's position and some of its thinking. As presiding officer, I did not vote on the issue. However, I have sent a separate letter to be distributed to you expressing my personal comments.