

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING
AB 1837 (Mark González)
As Amended March 12, 2026
Majority vote

SUMMARY

Makes permanent a previously authorized pilot program that allows transit agencies to enforce parking violations in transit-only lanes and at transit stops using video images.

COMMENTS

Cities are designating lanes for transit-only use in order to make public transit more efficient. According to *Best Practices in Implementing Tactical Transit Lanes*, a guide produced by UCLA Institute of Transportation Studies, transit-only lanes have been able to improve peak congestion travel times by 20-28%. These lanes can produce dramatic decreases in the variability of transit travel times. Research suggests that reducing total amount of time it takes a transit rider to go door-to-door by 5-15% can increase urban pike ridership by 2-9%.

Current law generally requires parking tickets to be physically placed on a vehicle. This bill modernizes this by permanently authorizing transit agencies to use automated cameras and allowing citations to be mailed directly to the registered vehicle owner—a process that ensures enforcement without requiring a physical officer to intercept the vehicle in traffic.

Car parking in transit-only lanes can reduce the benefits of these lanes by slowing down transit vehicles. In San Francisco, this problem was successfully addressed with the passage of AB 101 (Ma), Chapter 377, Statutes of 2007, which authorized San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) to equip transit buses with forward-facing parking control devices and to issue citations to vehicles blocking a bus in a transit-only lane. A report issued on the effectiveness of that program by SFMTA showed that during the pilot phase of the program, transit delays were reduced by as much as 20%.

Moreover, there is also reason to believe the enforcement changed behavior of motorists as intended. In 2012, 3,700 citations were issued using the cameras authorized by this program. Those numbers dropped to 3,400 in 2014. Evidence suggests the program functions as an effective deterrent rather than a permanent revenue stream: in San Francisco, the number of vehicles receiving three or more citations dropped by 50% within two years of implementation. In 2009, when the program started, 101 vehicles were issued three or more citations. By 2011 that number dropped to 51. Only 13.7% of the vehicles cited in 2014 had two or more citations.

Following SFMTA's success, the California Legislature passed SB 1051 (Hancock), Chapter 427, Statutes of 2016, which authorized Alameda-Contra Costa (AC) Transit to use cameras on buses to enforce parking in transit-only lanes until January 1, 2022. Like SFMTA, AC Transit was required to provide the Legislature with a report on their program's implementation. Due to implementation delays, AC Transit began using the cameras in October of 2020. Unlike SFMTA, AC Transit did not have data to show a before-and-after effect, as AC Transit did not have transit-only lanes in operation prior to this program's implementation. AC Transit reports that on-time performance improved from 54% to 75% since the service began.

AB 917 (Bloom), Chapter 709, Statutes of 2021 made the AC Transit pilot program a statewide pilot for five years. In the last five years, Los Angeles Metro (LA Metro), Sacramento Regional Transit Association (SacRT), and Santa Monica Department of Transportation (Big Blue Bus) have participated in the pilot program. Big Blue Bus did not begin the pilot until September 1, 2025, and does not plan on releasing a report until the one-year anniversary of the program.

LA Metro began issuing citations with fines starting in February 2025. From February 2025 to 2026 the system issued 127,437 citations. Over time, the number of citations issued per bus decreased by 33%. The program ultimately generated \$22 million in fine revenue, 75% of this revenue went to LA Metro and 25% went to the City of Los Angeles. An analysis on the improvement of bus speed was not conducted.

SacRT issued their report to the Legislature on February 10, 2026. SacRT has installed cameras on 100 buses on 22 bus routes. Unlike the other transit districts, SacRT does not have bus-only lanes. Instead SacRT issued tickets to violators parking at bus stations as permitted by the new pilot program. 19,238 citations were issued, with a 44.7% decline in citations between March and December of 2025. SacRT did not report specific time savings as a result of the enforcement but noted that, "With fewer bus stops blocked by illegal parking, buses are more frequently able to board and alight passengers at the curb rather than in the street. In addition to safety, accessibility, and on-time performance benefits, increased availability of bus stops reduces the need for boarding and alighting in active traffic lanes."

Bus lane camera enforcement programs around the country have been proven to be effective. New York City has been operating cameras in bus-only lanes since 2010. New York City also uses stationary cameras to enforce parking in bus lanes. According to the New York City Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA), "From January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2023, 36,117,200 total camera events associated with bus lanes were recorded by DOT stationary cameras, and 500,882 total camera events associated with bus lanes were recorded." Of the vehicles that received a notice of liability in 2022, 86% of vehicles received only one violation, 9% of vehicles received two, and 5% received three or more. Of the vehicles that received a notice of liability in 2023, 80% of vehicles received only one violation, 12% of vehicles received two, and 8% received three or more. According to MTA, bus routes equipped with automated enforcement on average have increased speeds by 5% with some corridors seeing gains as high as 30%. These routes have also experienced a 20% reduction in collisions; and a 5% to 10% estimated reduction in emissions. There has also been a 40% reduction in bus stops being blocked by vehicles on these routes.

According to the Author

"I introduced AB 1837 because Californians deserve a transit system that actually moves. We know this technology works. In San Francisco, these cameras *cut* transit delays by 20%. Now, agencies like LA Metro in my district are seeing those same benefits. If we let this authority expire, our transit lanes will clog back up. It is essential for our buses to move efficiently and safely throughout our cities, and AB 1837 ensures we can keep doing just that."

Arguments in Support

The California Transit Association, *a co-sponsor of this bill*, argues "California has witnessed a growing number of cars on the state's roads in recent years, and with it an increase in drivers parking in designated transit-only lanes, at transit stops and double parking. Illegal parking in

these zones compromises transit operators' ability to provide safe, reliable, and accessible public transit service. Until the vehicle relocates, transit-only lanes, general traffic lanes, and transit stops are effectively rendered out of service. This reduces transit system reliability by slowing down transit vehicle speeds and negatively impacts transit riders. In addition to the service impacts, a partially blocked transit stop creates significant safety concerns."

"When a transit operator cannot reach the curb, riders are forced to negotiate the street and the gap that is created between the transit vehicle and the curb. This is a potentially dangerous maneuver for riders to make, and an impossible one for those with a disability or mobility limitations, including seniors. The Association has long-supported efforts allowing transit agencies to use innovative technologies to improve service and passenger safety."

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

This bill is keyed non-fiscal by Legislative Counsel

VOTES

ASM TRANSPORTATION: 14-1-1

YES: Wilson, Davies, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Carrillo, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Jackson, Papan, Ransom, Rogers, Sharp-Collins, Ward

NO: Macedo

ABS, ABST OR NV: Lackey

ASM PRIVACY AND CONSUMER PROTECTION: 13-2-0

YES: Bauer-Kahan, Bryan, Hoover, Irwin, Lowenthal, McKinnor, Ortega, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Ward, Wicks, Wilson

NO: Macedo, DeMaio

UPDATED

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