
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anna Caballero, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 289 (Haney) - State highway work zone speed safety program

Version: June 25, 2025

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: August 29, 2025

Policy Vote: TRANS. 13 - 2, JUD. 12 - 0

Mandate: No

Consultant: Mark McKenzie

Bill Summary: AB 289 would require the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to establish a five-year speed safety system pilot program that utilizes up to 75 speed safety systems on state highway construction or maintenance areas until January 1, 2032.

***** ANALYSIS ADDENDUM – SUSPENSE FILE *****

The following information is revised to reflect amendments
adopted by the committee on August 29, 2025

Fiscal Impact:

- Caltrans would incur one-time costs for additional staff resources for up to two years to conduct “phase I” activities, including development and adoption of program guidelines and regulations, conducting stakeholder outreach and engagement, implementing a public information campaign, and evaluating the most cost-effective way to implement and operate the speed safety program. While these costs are unknown, staff estimates initial costs are likely to be at least in the high hundreds of thousands annually over two years, prior to the deployment of automated enforcement systems. (State Highway Account).
- Caltrans anticipates significant ongoing costs through 2031-32, to implement and administer the pilot program. Staff estimates that Caltrans contracting and staffing costs would likely be in the millions annually from 2028-29 through 2031-32, depending on the scale of the program, and whether Caltrans opts to procure and deploy all 35 systems throughout the state, or rolls out a more limited program on a regional basis. Caltrans indicates it would evaluate options for administering the pilot during the first phase of the program to determine whether to conduct certain operational duties in-house or through vendor contracts. For illustrative purposes, a similar program established in New York reported \$6.83 million in vendor expenses in 2023 to operate 30 enforcement units. (State Highway Account, Safe Highway Work Zone Account, and potentially federal funds)
- Unknown, likely significant civil penalty revenues, beginning in 2028-29, which would at least partially offset Caltrans costs to administer the speed safety program. Actual revenues would depend upon the number of systems that are operational, the volume of citations issued, and the number of violations for each level of fines imposed. To the extent the citation revenues fully offset Caltrans costs to administer the program, any remaining funds would be available for expenditure on specified enhanced enforcement program costs in construction and maintenance zones. (Safe Highway Work Zone Account)

- Unknown, potentially significant court workload cost pressures for superior courts to hear and adjudicate appeals of hearing officer determinations that are brought under the provisions of this bill. These costs would be partially offset by the \$25 fees for filing appeals. Staff notes that it generally costs about \$10,500 to operate a courtroom for one eight-hour day. Although courts are not funded on the basis of workload, increased staff time and resources may create a need for additional support from the General Fund to support court operations. The 2025-26 Budget includes \$38 million in ongoing support from the General Fund to backfill the current fund imbalance in the Trial Court Trust Fund and help pay for court operations, (Trial Court Trust Fund, General Fund).

Author Amendments:

- Clarify that a “speed safety system” is also known as an automated speed enforcement system.
- Require specified signage that clearly identifies the presence of a speed safety system to be placed between 500 feet and one mile, inclusive, before the placement of the system, as determined by Caltrans.
- Clarify that a speed safety system may only record speed violations and actively issue citations when Caltrans workers, including specified contractors, are present in the work zone, rather than when construction or maintenance workers are present.
- Require Caltrans to consult with relevant state agencies generally, rather than specifically with the California Highway Patrol, when developing program guidelines.
- Clarify that citation revenues deposited into the new Safe Highway Work Zone Account would be continuously appropriated to Caltrans for the administration of the program first, and any remaining funds would be used by Caltrans for the Construction Zone Enhanced Enforcement Program and the Maintenance Zone Enhanced Enforcement Program.

Committee Amendments: Reduce the number of speed safety systems that Caltrans may utilize during the speed safety program from up to 75 to up to 35 systems.

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