
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

SB 1279 (Gonzalez) - City of Long Beach Pacific Coast Highway speed safety system pilot program

Version: April 15, 2026

Policy Vote: TRANS. 10 - 1, P., D.T., &
C.P. 7 - 2

Urgency: No

Mandate: No

Hearing Date: April 27, 2026

Consultant: Mark McKenzie

Bill Summary: SB 1279 would authorize the City of Long Beach to establish a speed safety system pilot program that utilizes up to five speed safety systems on the Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) until January 1, 2032, as specified.

Fiscal Impact:

- Unknown 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. See Staff Comments. (Trial Court Trust Fund, General Fund).
- Unknown, significant local costs for the City of Long Beach to establish and administer additional automated speed enforcement systems on the PCH, including adopting and amending specified policies and guidelines prior to implementing a program, conducting a public information campaign, identifying sites, installing signage and infrastructure, adjudicating violations, establishing a diversion program for indigent violation recipients, and evaluating and reporting the systems' impacts. Staff notes that any costs incurred by the City of Long Beach to establish and administer an expanded automated speed enforcement system would not be state-reimbursable because those costs would be attributable to a discretionary action, rather than a state mandated local program. In addition, any local costs are likely to be fully offset by revenue gains from civil penalties paid by violators of speed laws in enforcement zones. (local funds)

Background: Existing law establishes a "basic speed law" that prohibits a person from driving a vehicle upon a highway at a speed greater than is reasonable or prudent having due regard for weather, visibility, the traffic on, and the surface and width of, the highway, and in no event at a speed which endangers the safety of persons or property. Existing law authorizes the designation of "safety corridors" for up to one-fifth of a local jurisdiction's streets with the highest number of injuries and fatalities, and requires the Department of Transportation to formally define the term in the next revision of the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Once a local agency designates a safety corridor, existing law authorizes the jurisdiction to lower speed limits in those corridors by 5 mph from the existing speed limit established by an engineering and traffic survey.

Existing law, as enacted by AB 645 (Friedman), Chap. 808/2023, authorizes the cities of Los Angeles, San Jose, Oakland, Glendale, Long Beach, and San Francisco to

establish an automated speed enforcement pilot program for five years until January 1, 2032. Existing law specifies the number of cameras that may be installed in each jurisdiction, and limits their use to school zones, streets that local authorities have determined to have a high number of incidents of speed contests or exhibitions of speed, and streets that are safety corridors, as specified. Existing law, as enacted by SB 1297 (Allen), Chap. 631/2024, authorized the City of Malibu to establish a speed safety system pilot program of up to five cameras on the PCH under the same parameters as the pilot program authorized by AB 645. Existing law requires a participating jurisdiction to do the following:

- Adopt a specified Speed Safety System Use Policy and Speed Safety System Impact Report prior to implementing the program.
- Engage in a specified public information campaign at least 30 days prior to implementation, as specified.
- Issue warning notices rather than notices of violation for the first 60 days of the program.
- Develop uniform guidelines for the screening and issuing of notices of violation and for the processing and storage of confidential information.
- Impose a specified graduated scale of civil penalties for violations, depending on the speed recorded over the established speed limit, provide for an appeals process, and offer a specified diversion program for indigent persons who receive a notice of violation.
- Use revenues from automated enforcement violation penalties to first recover program costs, including installation of cameras, adjudication of violations, reporting requirements, and the construction of traffic calming measures.
- Submit an evaluation of the program to its local governing body and the Legislature to determine the system's impact on street safety and the economic impact on the communities where the system is utilized, as specified.

Under the current pilot program established by AB 645, the City of Long Beach is authorized to deploy 18 cameras on local streets and roads, but installations along state highways within Long Beach's city limits are prohibited. The City maintains 206 centerline miles of arterial roadways, while Caltrans maintains approximately 11 miles within the city limits, including 8 miles of the PCH. According to Long Beach, there have been 192 fatalities from vehicle-related crashes in the City since 2020, with 39 fatal crashes on the PCH alone. As such, this stretch of state highway accounts for less than 1% of Long Beach's arterial roadways, but accounts for about 20% of vehicle-related fatalities.

Proposed Law: SB 1279 would authorize the City of Long Beach to establish an automated speed enforcement program for five years until January 1, 2032. Specifically, this bill would:

- Authorize the City of Long Beach to establish a program for speed enforcement that uses up to five automated cameras to enforce speed limits on the PCH if the program meets all of the following requirements:
 - The City continues to fund the additional traffic enforcement on the PCH provided by the California Highway Patrol.

- Identifies the presence of a speed safety system by signs stating “Photo Enforced,” along with speed limit signs with flashing beacons and speed feedback, within 500 feet of the placement of the system, as specified.
- Identifies the street or portions of the street approved for automated enforcement and the hours of enforcement on the City’s website.
- Ensures that the system is regularly inspected at least every 60 days and certified as properly installed and operating, and calibrated at least once each year, as specified. Documentation of regular inspection, operation, and calibration must be retained for at least 180 days after the system has been permanently removed.
- Utilizes fixed or mobile systems that provide real-time notification to the driver when violations are detected.
- Require Long Beach’s governing body to adhere to the adopted Speed Safety System Use Policy, as specified. The policy must be available for public review, including by posting it on the local agency’s website.
- Require Long Beach’s governing body to approve an addendum to its existing Speed Safety System Impact Report prior to implementing the program. The addendum must be made available for public review at least 30 calendar days prior to adoption at a public hearing.
- Require that a public information program be commenced for at least 30 days prior to the implementation of the camera program and that for the first 60 days of enforcement only warning notices be issued. A vehicle’s first violation for traveling 11-15 miles per hour over the posted speed limit would also be a warning notice.
- Require the City of Long Beach to establish guidelines for the screening and issuing of notices of violation and for the processing and storage of confidential information. The notice shall include a clear photograph of the license plate and rear of the vehicle only, the name and address of the vehicle owner, the vehicle license number, the Vehicle Code violation, the speed of the vehicle, posted speed limit, the date, time, and location of the violation, verification of the most recent calibration of the system, a statement that payment is required within 30 days, the amount of civil penalty that is due, a specified affidavit of nonliability, and a specified proof of service. Notices must not include images of the rear window area of the vehicle.
- Specify a violation of speed laws captured by an automated speed enforcement system is subject to a civil penalty assessed to the registered owner of the vehicle in the amount of \$50 for a speed violation from 11 to 15 miles per hour over the posted speed limit, \$100 for a speed violation from 16 to 25 miles per hour over the posted speed limit, \$200 for a speed violation of 26 miles per hour or more over the posted speed limit, and \$500 for traveling at a speed of 100 miles per hour or greater. The penalty would not result in a loss of the driving privilege or in a violation point being assessed against the violator.
- Require Long Beach to: (1) offer a diversion program for specified indigent persons, to perform community service or complete an educational program in lieu of paying a civil penalty for an automated speed system violation; (2) offer a payment plan to pay fines in monthly installments of no more than \$25 with a processing fee of no more than \$5; and (3) reduce the applicable fines and penalties by 80% for indigent persons and by 50% for persons up to 250% above the federal poverty level.
- Require revenues from automated enforcement violation penalties to first be used to recover program costs, including installation of cameras, adjudication of violations, and reporting requirements.

- Require Long Beach to maintain existing commitments of local funds for traffic calming measures and annually expend not less than the average annual expenditures for those purposes, as specified, to retain authorization to participate in the program.
- Establish that the photos and administrative records shall be confidential, and that Long Beach shall use and allow access to these records only for the purposes of the automated speed enforcement system. Limits on how long records can be retained are established and disclosures to others prohibited.
- Prescribe a process for contesting a violation, including requesting an initial review of the notice of violation by the issuing agency, conducting an administrative hearing, and authorization for a violator to file an appeal with the superior court if the person is not satisfied with the results of the administrative hearing, as specified.
- Require Long Beach to submit an evaluation of the program to its local governing body and the Legislature by March 1 of the fifth year in which the system has been implemented to determine the system's impact on street safety and the economic impact on the communities where the system is utilized, as specified.
- Sunset the provisions of the bill on January 1, 2032.

Related Legislation: AB 289 (Haney), Chap. 684/2025, authorized Caltrans to establish a five-year work zone speed safety pilot program to enforce speeding violations in highway maintenance and construction work zones using specified safety systems for automated enforcement.

SB 1297 (Allen), Chap. 631/2024, authorized the City of Malibu to establish a five-year Speed Safety System Pilot Program that utilizes up to five speed safety systems for automated enforcement on the Pacific Coast Highway until January 1, 2032.

AB 645 (Friedman), Chap. 808/2023, authorized the Cities of Glendale, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Oakland, San Francisco, and San Jose to establish a Speed Safety System Pilot Program, which provides for automated speed enforcement on specified streets for up to five years until January 1, 2032

Staff Comments: It is unknown how many additional actions will be brought in superior court to appeal hearing officer determinations as a result of this bill. Staff notes that it generally costs about \$10,500 to operate a courtroom for one eight-hour day. If civil cases brought as a result of this bill take an additional 40 hours of court time in the aggregate in a given year, the cost pressures to the courts would surpass the Suspense File threshold. Although courts are not funded on the basis of workload, increased staff time and resources resulting from additional case filings may result in delayed court services and create a need for enhanced support from the General Fund to fund court operations. Staff notes that trial court operations have cumulatively received over \$1 billion from the General Fund over the last five Budget Acts to improve service levels. The Governor's Proposed 2026-27 Budget includes \$70 million in ongoing support from the General Fund to continue to backfill the fund imbalance in the Trial Court Trust Fund and help pay for trial court operations. The Proposed Budget includes total funding of \$5.3 billion (\$3.3 billion General Fund and \$2 billion other funds) in 2026-27 for the Judicial Branch, of which \$3 billion is provided to support trial court operations.