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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- AUTOMATED SAFETY ZONE
SPEED ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2025

Introduced By: Representative Scott Slater

Date Introduced: February 28, 2025

Referred To: House Municipal Government & Housing

(by request)

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 31 of the General Laws entitled "MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES"
2 is hereby amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 14.1

4 AUTOMATED SAFETY ZONE SPEED ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2025

5 **31-14.1-1. Short title.**

6 This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Automated Safety Zone Speed
7 Enforcement Act of 2025".

8 **31-14.1-2. Purpose.**

9 This chapter enables municipalities to implement, subject to state and local approval,
10 automated speed enforcement systems to designated safety zones outside of school zones, as
11 defined in chapter 41.3 of title 31, in order to improve public safety and reduce traffic violations.

12 **31-14.1-3. Definitions.**

13 As used in this chapter:

14 (1) "Automated safety zone speed enforcement system" means a device with sensors that
15 works with speed measurement tools to record images of vehicles violating posted speed limits,
16 including a system using one or more vehicle detectors in combination with photography to identify
17 and provide a photographic image of vehicles which are exceeding the posted speed limit, or the
18 speed limit designated by state law or regulation, for a given zone, and that may be in a fixed or

1 mobile configuration.

2 (2) "Safety zone" means one or more of the following located within a municipality:

3 (i) High-traffic corridors or areas identified by traffic studies commissioned and by a
4 municipality or the department of transportation;

5 (ii) Pedestrian utilized areas, including without limitation, those near parks, playgrounds,
6 transit hubs, or hospitals;

7 (iii) Other areas with demonstrated safety concerns, as identified by a municipality or the
8 state.

9 **31-14.1-4. Automated safety zone speed enforcement system authorized.**

10 Municipalities are hereby authorized to operate automated safety zone speed enforcement
11 systems, provided that no speed enforcement system shall be operated in the state unless:

12 (1) The system has been approved and certified for use by the director of the department
13 of transportation;

14 (2) A traffic study has been conducted by or on behalf of the municipality, and submitted
15 to the director of the department of transportation for review and approval; and

16 (3) The municipality has demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the director of the department
17 of transportation, safety concerns in the proposed safety zone, including but not limited to, high
18 collision rates, excessive speeding, or significant pedestrian activity as identified in the traffic
19 study, and alignment with the municipality's traffic safety objectives, as approved by the
20 municipality's police department.

21 **31-14.1-5. Public Notice and Signage.**

22 Municipalities must provide at least thirty (30) days' public notice before activating any
23 automated safety zone speed enforcement system, including:

24 (1) Announcements via local media outlets;

25 (2) Clear signage no less than five hundred feet (500') before the enforcement area,
26 indicating the presence of automated speed enforcement monitoring.

27 **31-14.1-6. Automated safety zone speed enforcement system operational**
28 **requirements and certification.**

29 (a) No automated safety zone speed enforcement system shall be used in the state unless
30 the system has been approved and certified for use by the director of the department of
31 transportation. The director of the department of transportation, in cooperation with the state police,
32 shall require that any automated safety zone speed enforcement system approved and certified for
33 use meets the following requirements:

34 (1) All automated safety zone speed enforcement systems operated under this chapter shall

1 record the speed of vehicles within plus or minus one mile per hour of the actual speed.

2 (2) All automated safety zone speed enforcement systems operated under this chapter shall
3 record at least two (2) photographic images of the vehicle exceeding the speed limit, one of which
4 shall include the license plate attached to the rear of the vehicle.

5 (3) All automated safety zone speed enforcement systems operated under this chapter shall,
6 at the time of violation, imprint upon the photographic images of vehicles exceeding the speed
7 limit:

8 (i) The date and time of the violation; and

9 (ii) The identity of the street, and location upon that street, including the direction of travel
10 and lane of travel; this requirement may be met with code designations; and

11 (iii) The posted or lawfully designated speed limit for the street being monitored; and

12 (iv) The monitored speed of the vehicle identified in the photographic images as exceeding
13 the posted or lawfully designated safety zone speed limit; and

14 (v) The consecutive event number of each photograph taken.

15 (4) At least one hundred feet (100') prior to entering a safety zone area where an automated
16 safety zone speed enforcement system is being operated, and on each approach to that area, four
17 (4) signs, each measuring three feet (3') in height by four feet (4') in width, shall be erected in
18 locations where the view is unobstructed, warning motorists that they will be entering an area
19 monitored by an automated safety zone enforcement system and that violators of speed limitations
20 may be prosecuted.

21 (b) In the event a fixed or mobile automated safety zone speed enforcement system is to be
22 installed or used by any person other than the department of transportation or state police personnel
23 on a state-maintained street, roadway or highway, the director of transportation shall approve
24 installation or use of the system.

25 **31-14.1-7. Maintenance of system.**

26 The state department of transportation and municipalities may enter into an agreement with
27 a private corporation or other entity to provide automated safety zone speed enforcement system
28 equipment services and to maintain the system. A contract between a government agency and a
29 manufacturer or supplier of an automated safety zone speed enforcement system shall be based on
30 the value of such equipment and related support services and shall not be based on a percentage of
31 the revenue generated by the automated safety zone speed enforcement system.

32 **31-14.1-8. Citation precedent.**

33 In the event a law enforcement officer stops and issues a citation to the driver of a vehicle
34 for a speeding violation, which violation is also captured by an automated safety zone speed

1 enforcement system, the citation issued to the driver by the law enforcement officer shall have and
2 take precedence, and the automated safety zone speed enforcement system citation shall be
3 dismissed.

4 **31-14.1-9. Hearings.**

5 Evidence from an automated safety zone speed enforcement system approved by the
6 director of the department of transportation shall be considered substantive evidence in the
7 prosecution of all civil traffic violations. Evidence from an automated safety zone speed
8 enforcement system approved by the director of the department of transportation shall be admitted
9 without further authentication and such evidence may be deemed sufficient to sustain a civil traffic
10 violation. In addition to any other defenses as set forth herein, any defenses cognizable at law, with
11 the exception of that available under § 31-41.1-7, shall be available to the individual who receives
12 the citation commencing a prosecution under this chapter.

13 **31-14.1-10. Driver/registered owner liability.**

14 (a) The registered owner of the motor vehicle shall be primarily responsible in all
15 prosecutions brought pursuant to the provisions of this chapter, except as otherwise provided in this
16 section.

17 (b) In all prosecutions of civil safety zone violations based on evidence obtained from an
18 automated safety zone speed enforcement system, the registered owner of a vehicle which has been
19 operated in violation of a civil traffic violation, may be liable for such violation. The registered
20 owner of the vehicle may assume liability for the violation by paying the fine, or by defending the
21 violation pursuant to the remedies available under the law.

22 (c) The lessee of a leased vehicle shall be considered the owner of a motor vehicle for
23 purposes of this section.

24 **31-14.1-11. Use of evidence in criminal and civil cases.**

25 Nothing in this chapter shall prohibit the use of evidence produced by an automated safety
26 zone speed enforcement system in a criminal or civil proceeding; provided, that the admissibility
27 of such evidence shall follow applicable laws and rules of procedure and rules of evidence which
28 apply in criminal and civil proceedings.

29 **31-14.1-12. Nature of violations.**

30 Notwithstanding any other provision of law:

31 (1) No violation for which a civil penalty is imposed under this chapter shall be considered
32 a moving violation; nor shall it be included on the driving record of the person on whom the liability
33 is imposed; nor shall it be used for insurance rating purposes in providing motor vehicle insurance
34 coverage.

1 (2) Impositions of a penalty pursuant to this chapter shall not be deemed a criminal
2 conviction of an owner or operator.

3 (3) The defense available under § 31-41.1-7 (application for dismissal based on good
4 driving record) shall not be available for any violation imposed under this chapter.

5 **31-14.1-13. Security of records.**

6 (a) The recorded images produced by an automated safety zone speed enforcement system
7 shall not be deemed "public records" subject to disclosure pursuant to § 38-2-2.

8 (b) All recorded images that do not identify a violation shall be destroyed within ninety
9 (90) days of the date the image was recorded, unless otherwise ordered by a court of competent
10 jurisdiction.

11 (c) All recorded images that identify a violation shall be destroyed within one year after
12 the violation is resolved by administrative payment, trial, or other final disposition, unless
13 otherwise ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction.

14 (d) The privacy of records produced pursuant to this chapter shall be maintained; provided
15 that aggregate data not containing personal identifying information may be released.

16 **31-14.1-14. Reports.**

17 The agency or municipality authorizing the installation of automated safety zone speed
18 enforcement system shall prepare an annual report to be furnished to the director of the department
19 of transportation, containing data on:

20 (1) The number of citations issued at each particular safety zone;

21 (2) The number of those violations paid by mail and online;

22 (3) The number of those violations found after trial or hearing;

23 (4) The number of violations dismissed after trial or hearing;

24 (5) The number of accidents at each safety zone;

25 (6) A description as to the type of accident;

26 (7) An indication regarding whether there were any injuries involved in any accident
27 reported;

28 (8) The cost to maintain the automated safety zone speed enforcement system; and

29 (9) The amount of revenue obtained from the automated safety zone speed enforcement
30 system.

31 **31-14.1-15. Penalties.**

32 (a) Every person found to have violated the provisions of this chapter shall be fined fifty
33 dollars (\$50.00) for each offense; provided, however that for a period of thirty (30) days following
34 the installation of any new automated safety zone speed enforcement system, a violation recorded

1 by the system shall only be enforced by the issuance of a warning.

2 (b) A violation of this chapter shall not be considered a moving violation for purposes of
3 the motorist’s driving record.

4 (c) Every three (3) years from the date of the motorist’s first offense under this chapter, the
5 court shall expunge any automated safety zone speed enforcement violations during the preceding
6 three-year (3) period.

7 **31-14.1-16. Suspension for failure to pay fine.**

8 (a) In the event a person has failed to pay fines or costs imposed for a violation of any
9 provision of this chapter within the time period established by the municipality or has failed to
10 make satisfactory arrangements with the municipality for payment of such fines or costs, the
11 division of motor vehicles shall, upon certification of the foregoing from the municipal police
12 department of the city or town where the violation occurred and notice to the person, suspend the
13 license of a person to operate a motor vehicle.

14 (b) Prior to suspension, a person shall be entitled to request a review with the municipality
15 regarding his or her ability to pay by submitting a request to the municipal police department, which
16 shall evaluate the request and may establish a payment plan or alternative arrangements consistent
17 with the municipality’s policies.

18 (c) The suspension shall remain in effect until all fines or costs are paid to the municipality
19 or satisfactory arrangements have been made with the municipality for payment.

20 **31-14.1-17. Not applicable to school zones.**

21 This chapter does not apply to automated school zone speed enforcement systems, which
22 are governed by chapter 41.3 of title 31 (the Automated School-Zone-Speed-Enforcement System
23 Act of 2016).

24 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- AUTOMATED SAFETY ZONE
SPEED ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2025

- 1 This act would enable cities and towns to expand the use of automated speed enforcement
- 2 systems in Rhode Island to designated safety zones, excluding school zones.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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