



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Martin Malavé Dilan

Senate Legislation, Sponsored by Senator Dilan, Bolsters Safety Measures at New York City Intersections

MARTIN MALAVÉ DILAN April 6, 2009

(Albany, NY)—Today, legislation sponsored by Senator Martin Malavé Dilan (D-Brooklyn) passed the Senate, authorizing New York City to increase the number of red light cameras at intersections as part of a larger statewide initiative.

The State Senate passed a package of six bills Tuesday, April 7, that improves traffic safety statewide through the installation of red light cameras in select cities. Under Senator Dilan's bill, S3750, New York City which has served as a pilot for red light cameras for more than a decade, will receive an additional 50 cameras.

"Records show that these cameras have worked. We have seen decreases in the number of accidents, decreases in the severity of accidents and injuries, and increases in prosecutions of those who run traffic lights," said Senator Dilan, Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee.

By design, red light cameras turn on only when the light is red, at which point they photograph only the license plate numbers of drivers who are "in the box" and disobey traffic safety laws. Traffic violations in more populated communities are more difficult to enforce due to the inability for officers to be at every intersection. The addition of these lights can

also be the deciding factor for drivers falsely accused of running a red-light and assist law enforcement in stolen vehicle investigations.

Senator Dilan's bill also includes safeguards protecting the privacy of drivers, by exempting recorded images from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Law. It also requires that municipalities exclude images of occupants and contents of the vehicle from photographs.

Statewide, red light cameras have also generated much-needed revenue for municipalities. Since the program's inception in New York City, net revenue from December 1993 to March 2008 was \$73,193,697. All revenue was collected through \$50 fines.

For the cash strapped city of New York, the revenue is much needed, although it is merely a perk of the legislation, said Senator Dilan.

He added, "This program has been an outstanding success and with the addition of 50 more intersections now under the watchful eye of red light camera's we can continue to improve the safety of motorists, passengers, pedestrians and cyclists."

"Red light cameras, first and foremost, are a safety issue. In New York City, they mitigate traffic congestion by reducing the incidence of blocking the box which impedes the flow of traffic; and in localities like Suffolk, Nassau, Yonkers, Buffalo and Rochester, they target motorists who illegally speed through red lights creating a grave safety risk to both pedestrians and drivers alike," said Senate Majority Leader Malcolm A. Smith. "While serving their primary function of keeping our streets safer, red light cameras will also provide local municipalities with another source of revenue during these difficult fiscal times."