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SB 220



The National Motorists Association

NMA LAUNCHES \$10,000 TICKET CAMERA CHALLENGE

(An open letter to all communities in Virginia and Maryland and Washington DC that employ red light ticket cameras)

The National Motorists Association is wagering \$10,000 to prove that our engineering approach can cut red light violations better than any ticket camera installation.

We have spent more than a year exposing the unethical exploitation associated with the use of red light ticket cameras. For example, we know that counterproductive government policies and government actions have largely created the increase in red light violations. This is not speculation, vague suspicion, or an educated guess. This is fact.

The use of ticket cameras to reward incompetent (if not outright devious) public agencies for failing to meet their professional responsibilities is a travesty that demands correction. Proper signal timing, better signal design, and improved intersections are the real answers to the red-light-violation problem.

The apparent increase in red light violations is largely the result of a 20-year pattern of deliberately changing the standards for the timing of yellow lights. This is an engineering problem, not an enforcement issue. There is ample and convincing evidence, ~~right in Northern Virginia~~, that increasing the yellow light duration dramatically and permanently reduces red light violations. Despite this evidence, these ticket camera cities are permitting unsafe and dangerous conditions to persist, while profiting from preventable red-light violations.

A more cynical perspective might suggest that this two-decade process of shortening yellow lights was done deliberately to create a "red light running crisis" and thereby foster public acceptance of ticket cameras.

Our claims have been met with feeble excuses that try to ignore the hard evidence that proves the "epidemic of red light running" is the product of poor traffic engineering policies. This is not a law enforcement problem.

Today we say to the communities that employ ticket cameras, "Let's put traffic engineering solutions to the test." Here's our challenge.

Show us any red light ticket camera intersection that still has high numbers of red light violations (there are plenty to choose from) and we will guarantee a MINIMUM of a 50 percent reduction in red light violations through the application of engineering solutions.

If our recommendations fail to meet our minimum goal of a 50 percent reduction in red light violations, we will pay the community \$10,000 to be used on any traffic safety program or project it chooses. But, if we prove the validity of our contentions, the community will employ

our engineering based recommendations at other troublesome intersections, and scrap its ticket camera program. What do you have to lose, other than your ticket camera revenue?

James J. Baxter
President
National Motorists Association

If you have any questions about this challenge, please direct those questions to Eric Skrum,
NMA Communications Director at or by calling 608/849-6000.

to see more information on photo enforcement.

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