

City of Bellingham Initiative No. 2011-01

City of Bellingham Initiative No. 2011-01 concerns automated traffic safety cameras. This measure would require the removal of any automated cameras used to issue tickets for stoplight, railroad crossing, and school zone violations installed under a 2010 ordinance and prohibit the installation of such cameras to issue tickets, unless approved by City Council and a majority of voters at an election, and limit the penalty to the lowest parking ticket fine. Should this measure be enacted into law?

Yes? _____

No? _____

Explanatory Statement

Bellingham Municipal Code Chapter 11.16 authorizes the use of automated traffic safety cameras to detect stoplight violations, railroad crossing violations, and school speed zone violations. That chapter also establishes standards and restrictions regarding the use of the cameras.

This measure was intended to restrict the City's use of automated traffic safety cameras. On September 6, 2011, the Washington State Court of Appeals declared this measure beyond the scope of local initiative power and an invalid initiative. Even if passed by a majority of voters, this measure will not be legally binding.

Statement For:

Thanks to 7000 Bellingham citizens who supported this initiative which simply requires the government to ask voters permission before corporations install profit-driven surveillance cameras. Voting "yes" gives the voters the right to decide - voting "no" means you trust the corporations.

INITIATIVE #2011-01 GIVES CITIZENS THE CHANCE TO DECIDE

After voters OK our initiative, local traffic engineers can then lead the discussion on implementing more effective (albeit less profitable) strategies such as education and awareness measures, intersection design changes, flashing warning lights, solar-powered speed indicator signs, etc. Those approaches are much more in line with the way we do things in Bellingham. Public hearings were denied and the contract was quietly signed, violating due process.

Bellingham's small town feel is ours to cherish. Slapping up red light and speed ticketing cameras, inviting corporations to treat citizens like ATM machines takes that away - it hurts our community.

Automatic ticketing cameras would export \$342,000 (minimum) annually away from the Bellingham economy, sending it to a Goldman Sachs-backed corporation in Arizona. Our city admits that research shows the red-light cameras increase collisions by 14%, while not substantially reducing reducing fatalities.

Let the people decide. Vote YES on #2011-01.

For information visit <http://www.bhamcamscam.com>

Rebuttal of Statement Against:

Opponents want to slam the door on citizen involvement, saying democracy "wastes time and money." We think transparency is key to a fair process. Your vote creates important checks and balances putting citizens on a level playing field against powerful corporate interests and lawsuits. Nearly 7000 citizens worked hard for important changes to establish a more fair and democratic process. Opponents want to reverse our democratic progress. If you support democracy and want cameras removed now, not later (there are several ways they can get out of the contract early without violating it), vote yes.

Statement Against:

Traffic safety cameras are a good idea. Bellingham has serious traffic safety problems - drivers run red lights and speed through school zones. At Holly and Forest, drivers run red lights almost every 15 minutes. Traffic safety cameras change poor driving behavior. Using 2 police officers to ticket at red lights (one to see it, one to ticket across the intersection) is a poor use of police resources when cameras will do the job. Bellingham will have six cameras; signs will be posted alerting drivers that cameras are present. Photographs of red light running and school zone speeding violations are taken when they occur. The pictures are secured on-line where Bellingham police review them to determine who gets ticketed. The driver has access with a security code to see their pictures; photos are archived in 30 days. Like a parking ticket, it's not on your record. The fine is the same as tickets from police. Lowering the fine to \$10 (lowest parking ticket) will not motivate drivers to change bad driving. Requiring a vote of the people wastes time and money. Cameras save money and help keep our streets safer for everyone. We urge you to vote NO on this initiative.

Rebuttal of Statement For:

Traffic safety cameras can change unsafe driving habits. Flashing lights don't seem to be enough to stop poor driving habits anymore. Cameras ticket drivers when running red lights or speeding through school zones. Safe drivers have nothing to fear from traffic cameras. Fines are equal to those on a ticket by a police officer and will fund the criminal justice system. Voting no is good common sense. VOTE NO for SAFER BELLINGHAM STREETS.

Statement For prepared by: Transportation Safety Coalition

Statement Against prepared by: Rebecca Johnson, Orphalee Smith, Todd Ramsay

Complete text of this measure may be found on page 87

Statements for, statements against, and rebuttals are the opinions of the authors and have not been checked for accuracy by any government agency.