



September 4, 2026

Mayor Ehlers and Members of the Encinitas City Council
City of Encinitas
505 South Vulcan Ave
Encinitas, CA 92024

SUBJECT: Vision Zero Coalition Support for the Proposed Red-Light Camera Program

Dear Mayor Ehlers and Members of the Encinitas City Council:

On behalf of the undersigned members of the Vision Zero Coalition, we write to strongly encourage you to move forward with implementing a red-light camera program under the SB 720 statute.

1. Red-light cameras are a proven lifesaving tool.

Traffic violence remains at historically high levels. Red light running is a significant cause of fatalities and deaths on our streets, including in our own communities. On April 25, 2025, 12-year-old Emery Chalekian was killed by a reckless red-light runner in Encinitas.

Enforcement of traffic safety laws is critical to achieving zero traffic fatalities. Red-light cameras are a proven solution to permanently reduce reckless driving behavior and prevent senseless tragedies like what happened to Emery.

In New York City, intersections with red light cameras saw a 73 percent decrease in red light running.¹ These intersections also saw a 65 percent reduction in deadly T-bone crashes and a 49 percent reduction in rear-end collisions.² Seattle saw a 50 percent reduction in fatal collisions at intersections with red light cameras.³ This is sustained behavioral change. In New York, 94 percent of vehicles that received tickets received no more than one or two violations.⁴ Seattle saw similar sustained success rates.

2. Red-light cameras can only enforce targeted illegal behavior at authorized intersections.

Unlike other types of camera equipment utilized by public safety agencies, red light cameras only enforce the specific type of illegal behavior they are authorized to combat. These cameras are triggered only when a driver illegally runs a red light,

¹ New York City Department of Transportation, New York City Red Light Camera Program Review 2024 Report (May 2024), available at <https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/nyc-red-light-camera-program.pdf>.

² Id.

³ City of Seattle, Traffic Safety Camera Pilot Project Final Evaluation Report (December 2027), available at [Red Light Study 07.pdf](#).

⁴ New York City Department of Transportation, New York City Red Light Camera Program Review 2024 Report (May 2024), available at <https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/nyc-red-light-camera-program.pdf>.

providing direct accountability if and only if an illegal and reckless violation that can result in loss of life is committed. Because the cameras are intended to enforce violations at specific intersections, they do not interact to create an information network that can be used for other purposes.

3. The SB 720 framework improves upon previous red-light camera programs.

The red-light camera program under consideration aligns with the SB 720 framework, a new law passed in 2025 that overhauls the previous red-light camera framework. Key distinctions between SB 720 and the previous red-light camera law include:

- **Implementation and Oversight Authority:** Under SB 720, Departments of Transportation and Public Works can manage the system, rather than solely police departments.
- **Liability:** Ticket liability is placed on the vehicle owner rather than the driver. This limits data retention and improves privacy protections.
- **Privacy:** SB 720 has strict privacy rules that prevent facial recognition, secondary use of collected data, requires facial blurring, and limits data retention.
- **Fines:** Fines under SB 720 are civil and are subject to an escalating system, starting at \$100. The law also provides for alternatives for low-income drivers. Fines under previous programs were criminal and sat at \$490.
- **Driver's license points:** Under SB 720, violations will not result in points against a driver's record.
- **Use of Funds:** Under the SB 720 framework, revenues from the program must be spent on Vision Zero improvements to make streets safer.

4. It's time to take enforcement of life saving laws seriously.

In 2024, there were 99 traffic fatalities and 197 serious injuries in San Diego County.⁵ It is time that we start seriously enforcing our laws that are intended to prevent these tragedies. Emery's story must not be repeated. Red light cameras are a safe and proven tool to help us prevent deaths like hers.

Sincerely,

Aria Grossman
Policy Manager
Circulate Planning & Policy

Laura Keenan
Co-Founder
Families for Safe Streets San Diego

Ian Hembree
Advocacy & Community Manager
San Diego County Bike Coalition

Israel Hernandez
Associate State Director, Advocacy
AARP California

⁵ San Diego Association of Governments, Traffic Safety Dashboard, available at <https://opendata.sandag.org/stories/s/Traffic-Safety-Dashboard/5f7y-nefe/>, last visited September 3, 2026.