

National Transportation Safety Board

Office of the Chair

Washington, DC 20594



May 25, 2022

The Honorable Kathleen Hochul
Governor
State of New York
New York State Capitol Bldg.
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul:

As Chair of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), I am writing to express support for the actions being taken to ensure that New York City's authority to install and operate speed safety cameras does not expire, and that the current law's operational restrictions regarding hours of use are removed. I encourage you to continue efforts to expand and strengthen New York State's laws in this important area.

The NTSB is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant accidents in other modes of transportation—railroad, highway, marine, and pipeline. We determine the probable cause of the accidents we investigate and make safety recommendations aimed at preventing future crashes. The recommendations that arise from our investigations and safety studies are our most important product.

This week, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) released its early estimate of traffic fatalities for 2021. NHTSA projects that approximately 42,915 people died in motor vehicle traffic crashes last year—a 10.5-percent increase from the 38,824 fatalities in 2020 and an increase of almost 20 percent over pre-pandemic levels. Specifically, NHTSA's estimate shows that speeding contributed to more than one-quarter of those fatalities. This is unacceptable, and one of the reasons "Implement a Comprehensive Strategy to Eliminate Speeding-Related Crashes" is on the NTSB's [2021-2022 Most Wanted List](#) of Transportation Safety Improvements.

Speeding can result in loss of vehicle control, which increases both the likelihood of a crash and the severity of injuries sustained. Unfortunately, speeding-related crashes are not a new issue nationwide; we investigated over 50 major crashes between 1967 and 2021 in which speed was cited as a safety issue or causal or contributing factor. In 2017, we published a safety study, [Reducing Speeding-Related Crashes Involving Passenger Vehicles](#), in which we issued [Safety Recommendation H-17-33](#) to multiple states, including New York (it is currently classified "Open—Acceptable Response" to your state).

H-17-33

Amend current laws to remove operational and location restrictions on the use of automated speed enforcement, except where such restrictions are necessary to align with best practices.

More recently, we investigated a January 5, 2020, crash in Mt. Pleasant Township, Pennsylvania, and recognized the importance of technology such as speed safety cameras to reliably supplement traditional enforcement measures. Our investigation showed that, when properly implemented, these cameras can slow speeds on our roadways. A study by the Insurance Institute of Highway Safety found that the proportion of drivers exceeding speed limits on city roads by more than 10 miles per hour declined by 82 percent six months after cameras were introduced. Further, their studies have found that speed safety cameras were associated with an 8 percent reduction in the likelihood that a crash was speeding-related and a 19 percent reduction in the likelihood that a crash involved an incapacitating or fatal injury. The existence of speed safety cameras results in slower speeds. Slower speeds save lives.

We are calling on New York City and State to prioritize safety technology like speed safety cameras to reduce speeding-related crashes and save lives. NHTSA's 2021 projections are troubling, and states need to take bold action to combat speeding and reverse the trend. Speeding happens at every hour of the day and night, not just between 6am and 10pm on weekdays. Extending and strengthening New York's safety camera law by removing existing restrictions will save lives and prevent injuries for all road users.

If I may be of any assistance in this—or any other—effort to improve transportation safety in New York, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Homendy
Chair

cc: The Honorable Eric L. Adams
Mayor
City of New York

The Honorable Adrienne Adams
Speaker
New York City Council