

United States General Accounting Office Washington, DC 20548

February 21, 2003

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt House of Representatives

Subject: Traffic Enforcement: Funding of Automatic Red-Light and Speed Enforcement Technologies

Dear Mr. Tiahrt:

A number of cities and counties have implemented photo enforcement programs to improve traffic safety. These programs use cameras to identify drivers running red lights or speeding and issue tickets to owners of identified vehicles. Such programs are eligible for funding through Department of Transportation (DOT) highway funding programs.

The former House Majority Leader and you asked us to examine the role that federal funds have played in the local deployment of photo enforcement devices and the amount of revenue generated by photo enforcement programs. In subsequent discussions with your staff, we agreed to (1) identify local jurisdictions that are using photo enforcement devices—red-light cameras or photo radar (speed cameras)—on federal-aid highways (i.e., roadways eligible to receive federal aid); (2) identify local jurisdictions that have received federal funding for photo enforcement; and (3) determine, for those jurisdictions that have received federal funding, how much revenue their photo enforcement programs have generated and the amount of that revenue received by private contractors.

As agreed with your office, we limited our review of photo enforcement programs to those 73 jurisdictions that had been identified by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety as having photo enforcement programs (see enc. I). We developed the data on these programs through a telephone survey of officials within the 73 jurisdictions and further supplemented the data with information requested from DOT. We did not independently verify the information provided by these sources.

Of the 73 jurisdictions we contacted, we identified 65 local jurisdictions that were operating photo enforcement programs at the time of our survey (Oct.-Nov. 2002). Through the survey or information provided by DOT, we determined that 40 of these jurisdictions were operating photo enforcement devices on federal-aid highways. Five jurisdictions had received federal funds totaling about \$508,000 for photo enforcement over the last 6 years. These jurisdictions had collected a total of about \$50.4 million in fines from these programs and paid about \$46.2 million to private contractors to operate the programs. Two of these jurisdictions reported that the

revenues from their photo enforcement programs were greater than the program costs, while the other three reported revenues less than program costs. The share of program revenues paid to contractors varied greatly among these five jurisdictions.

On December 6, 2002, we briefed your office on the preliminary results of our review. The slides in enclosure I contain updated information that we collected to supplement the briefing.

AGENCY COMMENTS

We provided DOT with a draft of this report for review and comment. DOT agreed with the information in the draft and provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate.

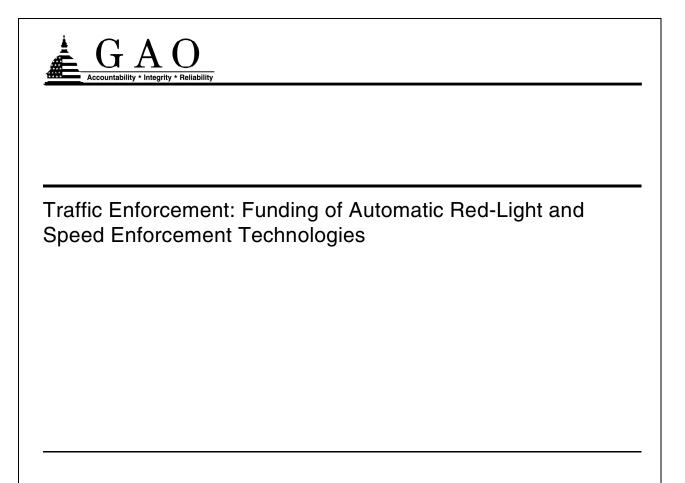
We conducted our work from October through December 2002 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

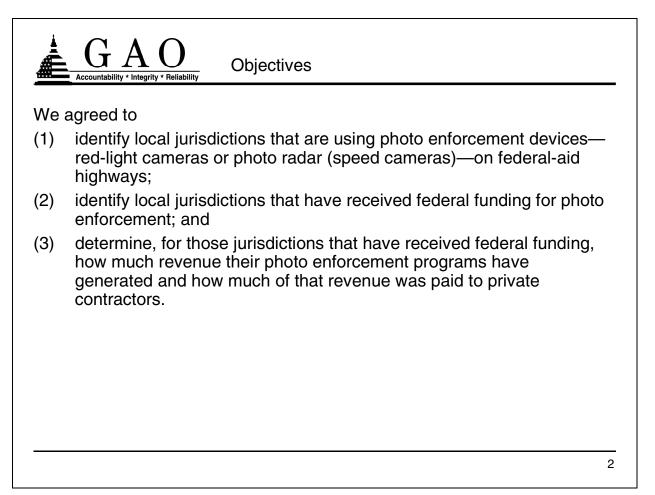
We plan no further distribution of this report until 7 days after its date. At that time, we will send copies of this report to interested congressional committees; the Secretary of Transportation; the Administrator, Federal Highway Administration; and the Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The report will also be available on GAO's home page at <u>http://www.gao.gov</u>.

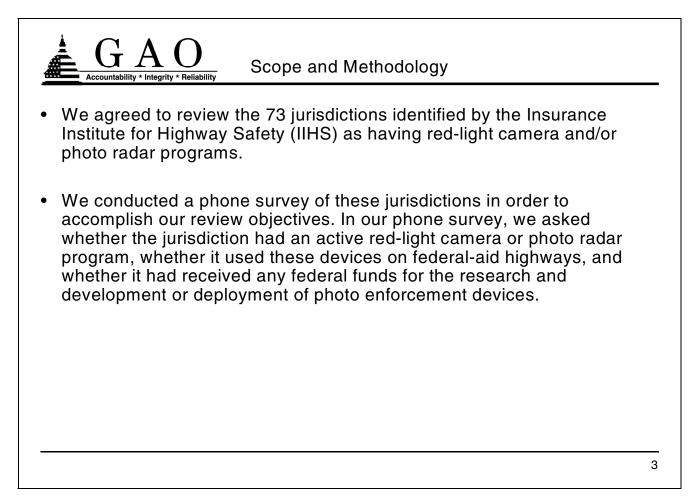
If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-2834 or <u>guerrerop@gao.gov</u>. Key contributors to this report were Sharon Dyer, Judy Guilliams-Tapia, and Robert White.

Sincerely yours,

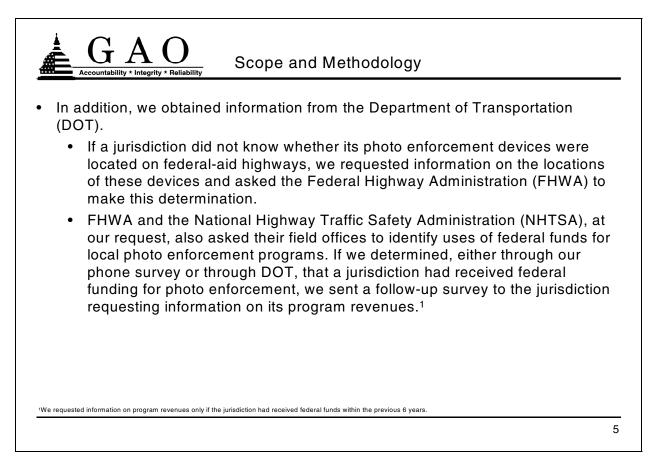
Peter F. Guerrero Director, Physical Infrastructure Issues

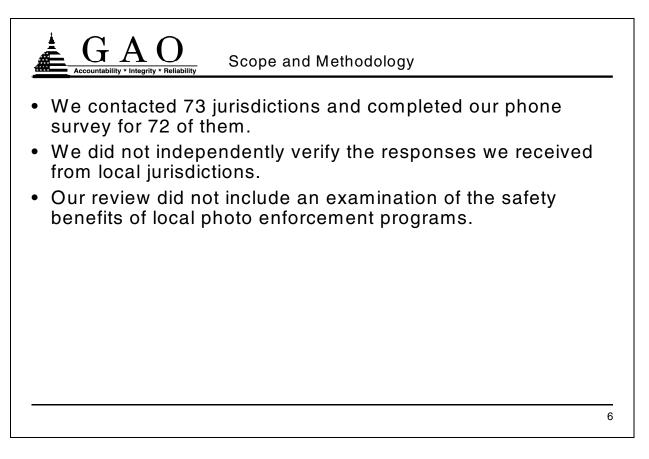


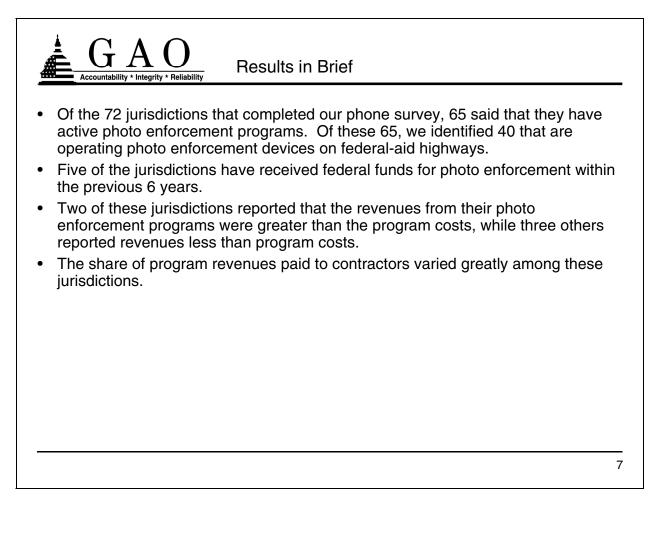


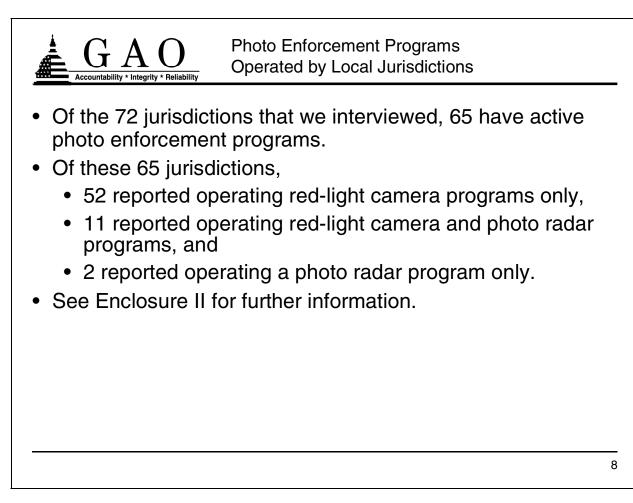


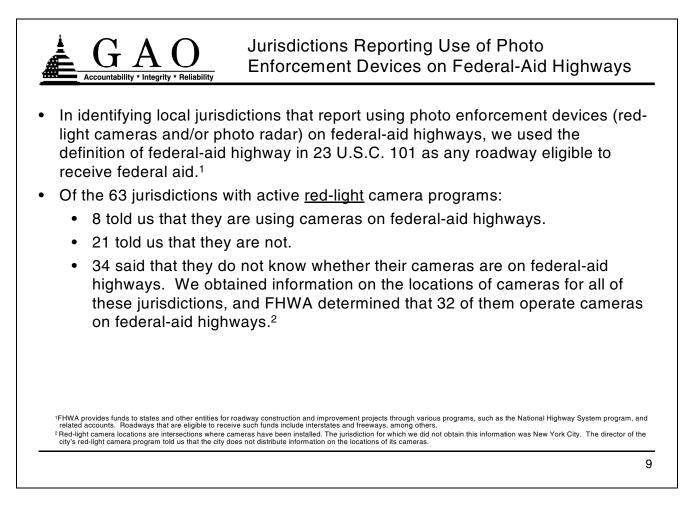
Arizona Chandler Mesa ^a Paradise Valley ^a Phoenix ^a Scottsdale ^a Tempe California Beverly Hills Culver City Cupertino El Cajon Fremont Fremont Fresno Garden Grove Indian Wells Irvine Long Beach Los Angeles City Los Angeles County Oxnard Redwood City Sacramento County San Diego	Ohio Dayton Toledo Oregon Beaverton [*] Medford [*] Portland [*] Tennessee Germantown Virginia Alexandria Arlington Fairfax County Fairfax County Fails Church Vienna Washington Lakewood [*]	Charles Coun Cheverly College Park Cottage City Forest Height Greenbelt Howard Coun Hyattsville Laurel Laurel Landover Hill Montgomery Morningside Prince Georg Riverdale Par New York New York City North Carolin Charlotte Fayetteville Greensboro High Point Wilmington	ied by IIHS using photo enfor San Francisco San Jose ^a San Juan Capistrano Ventura ^b West Hollywood Colorado Boulder ^a Denver ^a Fort Collins ^a Delaware Wilmington District of Columbia ^a Georgia Decatur Maryland Anne Arundel County Annapolis Baltimore City Baltimore County Bel Air Bladensburg	Mesa" Paradise Valley" Phoenix" Scottsdale" Tempe California Beverly Hills Culver Citly Cupertino El Cajon Fremont Fresno Garden Grove Indian Wells Irvine Long Beach Los Angeles Citly Los Angeles County Oxnard Redwood Citly Sacramento County
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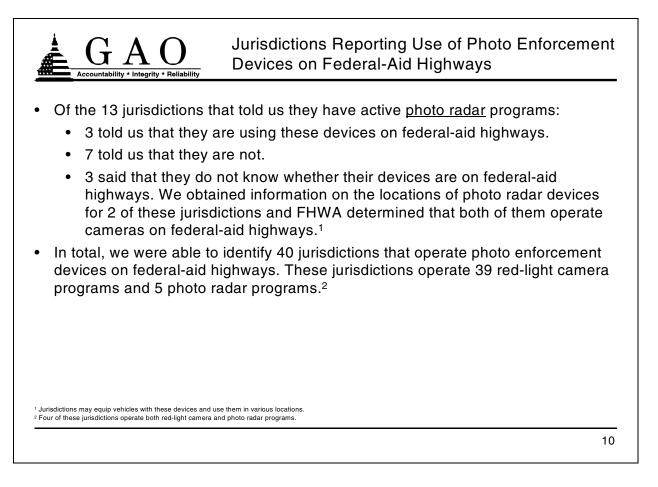


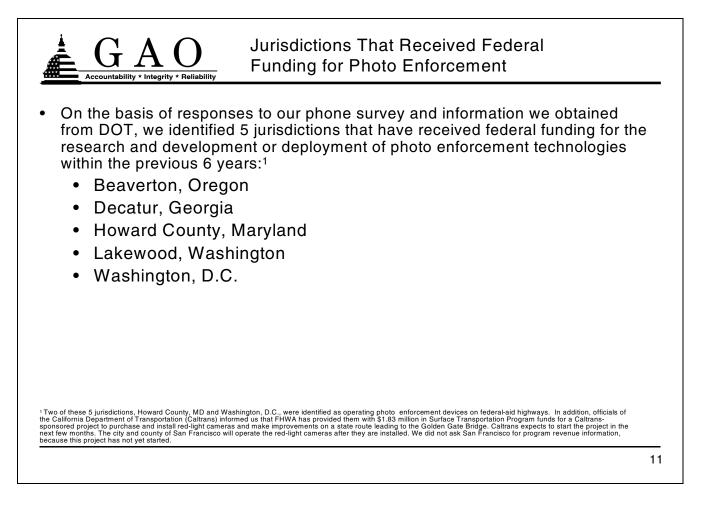










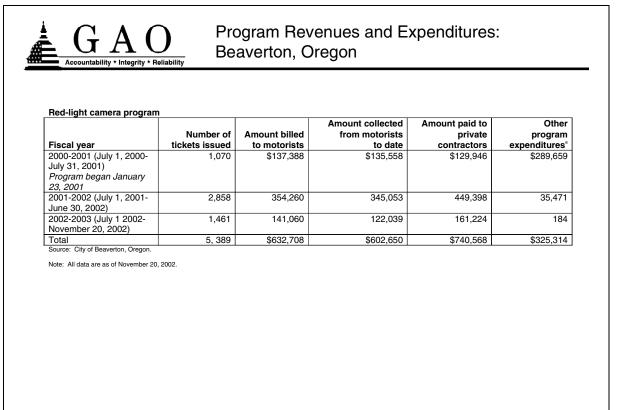


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		Name of	since October 1996	A	Dumana
Jurisdiction Beaverton, OR	Source of funds NHTSA grant (Section 157) ^a	Recipient City of Beaverton	Funding period 12/98-9/99	Amount \$106,410	Purpose Support public awareness activities related to pilot red- light camera program
Decatur, GA	NHTSA grant (Section 402) ^b	City of Decatur	10/02	\$105,219	Reimburse the city for capital expenses associated with the installation of red-light cameras
Howard County, MD	FHWA grant (Section 402) ^b	Howard County Police Dept.	Fall 1996-98	\$80,000	Support public awareness campaign and technology trials related to establishment of red-light camera program
Howard County, MD	FHWA grant (Demonstration Projects Program)	Howard County Dept. of Public Works	7/97-2/99	\$75,000	Evaluate digital red-light camera technology°
Lakewood, WA	Surface Transportation Program	City of Lakewood	1/01-12/02	\$72,000	Fund pilot red-light camera program
Washington, D.C.	FHWA grant (Research, Development, and Technology Program)	District of Columbia Dept. of Public Works	9/94-11/01	\$70,000	Evaluate D.C.'s red-light camera program

Source: DOT and local jurisdictions (data), GAO analysis.

*Seat Belt Incentive Grant Program. *State and Community Highway Safety Grant Program. *According to the manager of this R&D project, digital red-light camera technology was tested at 4 sites--3 in Howard County and 1 in Montgomery County. Montgomery County's participation in the project consisted of allowing access to the signal system at this one site; it did not receive any project funds.

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*Program expenditures, such as local personnel and overhead costs, other than payments to private contractors.

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Red-light came	Number of	Amount billed	Amount collected from motorists	Amount paid to private	Othe progran
Fiscal year	tickets issued	to motorists	to date	contractors	expenditures
2003	158	\$9,480	\$870	\$100,000 ^ª	\$6,919
Program					
began					
October 24,					
2002					
Note: Data reflect the					

neu-light cam	era program		Amount collected	Amount	Othe
	Number of	Amount billed to	from motorists	paid to	program
Fiscal year	tickets issued	motorists	to date	private contractors	expenditures
1998 1999	12,729	NA NA	NA NA	NA NA	N/
2000	31,352 30,828	NA	NA	NA	N/ N/
2000	26,004	NA	NA	NA	N/
2001 2002°	20,004	NA	NA	NA	N
Total	122.197	\$9,076,330	\$8,372, 269	\$3,079,478	\$2,325,00
Note: NA : Annual d	ata not available.				



Program Revenues and Expenditures: Lakewood, Washington

Red-light camera and photo radar programs

			Amount collected	Amount	Other
	Number of	Amount billed to	from motorists	paid to	program
Fiscal year	tickets issued	motorists	to date	private contractors	expenditures°
2001	13,520	\$1,189,734	\$581,102	\$443,838	\$330,000
Red-light					
camera	5,266	403,084	NA	204,247	NA
Photo radar [⊾]	8,254	786,650	NA	239,591	NA
2002	16,488	NA	642,340	461,569	207,000
Red-light					
camera	4,185	NA	NA	NA	NA
Photo radar	12,303	NA	NA	NA	NA
Total					
Red-light camera	9,451	NA	NA	NA	NA
Total photo radar	20,557	NA	NA	NA	NA
Total	30,008	NA	\$1,223,442	\$905,407	\$537,000

Source: City of Lakewood, Washington.

Note: NA: Annual data not available.

"Program began July 1, 2001. "Program began April 1, 2001. "Program expenditures, such as local personnel and overhead costs, other than payments to private contractors.

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Photo radar p	rogram		Amount collected		
	Number of	Amount billed to	from motorists	Amount paid to	Other program
Fiscal year	tickets issued	motorists	to date	private contractors	expenditure
2001	31,220	\$980, 375	\$420,584	\$997,774	N
2002	351,909	21,896,145	19,073,039	7,653,867	N
2003ª	18, 191	1,648,150	1,079,516	576,186	N
Total	383,129	\$24,524,670	\$20,573,139	\$9,227,827	N
	n Police Department, Washir available.	ngton, D.C.			N

Information Obtained on 73 Local Jurisdictions Identified by Insurance Institute for Highway Safety As Using Photo Enforcement

Jurisdiction	Responded to telephone survey	Active red- light camera program	Red-light cameras used on federal-aid highway ^a	Active photo radar program	Photo radar devices used on federal-aid highway ^a	Federal funds received for photo enforcement [⊳]
Chandler	~	~				
Mesa	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	· · ·		~		
Paradise	· ·	· · ·	~	~	~	
Valley	•	•	·	·	•	
Phoenix	~	~		~		
Scottsdale	· ·	* *	~	~	~	
Tempe	•	•	•	•	•	
California						
	~	~				
Beverly Hills	× ×	* *				
Culver City	~	~				
Cupertino						
El Cajon	~	~				
Fremont	~	~				
Fresno	~	~				
Garden Grove	~	~				
Indian Wells	~	~	~			
Irvine	~					
Long Beach	~	~	~			
Los Angeles City	~	~				
Los Angeles County	~	~				
Oxnard	~	~	~			
Redwood City	~					
Sacramento City	~	~	~			
Sacramento	~	*	~			
County						
San Diego	~	~	~			
San Francisco	~	~	~			
San Jose	~			~	~	
San Juan	~	*	~			
Capistrano						
Ventura ^c	~	~				
West Hollywood	~	~				
Colorado						
Boulder	~	~	~	~		
Denver	~			~		
Fort Collins	~	~	~	~	~	
Delaware						
Wilmington	~	~	~			
District of Columbia	~	~	~	~	~	~
Georgia						
Decatur	~	~				~
Maryland						
Anne Arundel	~	~	~			1
County						
Annapolis	~	1				
Baltimore City	~	~	~			
Baltimore County	~	~	~			1
Bel Air	~	~	1			1
Bladensburg	~	1	1			1
Charles County	~	~	~			
Cheverly	~	~	~			1
College Park	~	1	1			1
Cottage City	~	~	~			1
			1			1
Forest Heights	~					
Forest Heights Greenbelt	~	~	~			
Forest Heights Greenbelt Howard County		~	~			~

Jurisdiction	Responded to telephone survey	Active red- light camera program	Red-light cameras used on federal-aid highway ^a	Active photo radar program	Photo radar devices used on federal-aid highway [®]	Federal funds received for photo enforcement ^b
Landover Hills	- Survey	v	riigiiway ✓		inginway	emoreement
Laurel	~	~	~			
Montgomery County	~	~	~			
Morningside	~	~	~			
Prince George's	~	~	~			
County						
Riverdale Park	~	~	✓			
New York						
New York City	~	~				
North						
Carolina						
Charlotte	~	~	~			
Fayetteville	~	~				
Greensboro	~	~				
High Point	~	~	✓			
Wilmington	~	~	✓			
Ohio						
Dayton	~					
Toledo	~	~	~			
Oregon						
Beaverton	~	~		~		~
Medford	~	~		~		
Portland	~	~		~		
Tennessee						
Germantown	~	~	~			
Virginia						
Alexandria	~	~				
Arlington	~	~	~			
Fairfax City	~	~	~			
Fairfax County	~	~	~			
Falls Church	~	~	~			
Vienna	~	~	~			
Washington						
Lakewood	~	~		~		~
Total	72	63	39	13	5	5

Source: GAO's analysis of data obtained from phone surveys and DOT.

Note: GAO analysis of data obtained from telephone survey and DOT.

^aCheck marks indicate either that the jurisdiction told us it is using photo enforcement devices on federal-aid highways or that FHWA has determined, on the basis of information provided by the jurisdiction, that the jurisdiction is using such devices on federal-aid highways. We did not independently verify the responses or information we received from local jurisdictions.

^bCheck marks indicate either that the jurisdiction told us it had received federal funds for photo enforcement research and development or deployment or that FHWA and NHTSA provided us with information on federal funding received by the jurisdiction.

°The city of Ventura is also known as San Buena Ventura.