Overview

This bill authorizes the commissioner of public safety to conduct a pilot project on the use of photographic evidence in the enforcement of traffic-control signal laws. The bill allows citations to be issued for traffic signal law violations detected through photographic evidence and appropriates money for the commissioner to award grants for cities to conduct the pilot program.

1 Violation cited using photographic evidence. Provides a petty misdemeanor penalty for failure to obey traffic-control signals when the violation is cited as part of a pilot program administered by the commissioner of public safety under the bill. This petty misdemeanor applies to the owner of the vehicle, or, in the case of a leased motor vehicle, to the lessee of the vehicle.

Provides an exception if the owner presents written evidence that the motor vehicle had been reported to a law enforcement agency as stolen at the time of the violation. Specifies that the penalty does not apply to a lessor of a motor vehicle if the lessor keeps a record of the name and address of the lessee. Clarifies that this provision does not prohibit or limit the prosecution of a motor vehicle operator for violating the traffic-control signal laws.

2 Certain convictions not recorded. Specifies that violations of the traffic-control signal laws obtained through the use of photographic evidence under a pilot program shall not be kept on a person's driver's license record.

3 Pilot project.
Subd. 1. Commissioner to establish project. Requires the commissioner of public safety to establish a pilot project to test the feasibility and desirability of using photographic evidence as a basis for issuing citations for failure to obey traffic-control signal laws.

Subd. 2. Grants. Requires the commissioner to make grants to the city of Minneapolis and up to two additional statutory or home rule charter cities the commissioner selects from among applicants for the grants. Requires the grants to be used for planning and implementing a system
of enforcing traffic signals through use of photographic evidence of violations using automated equipment not operated by a peace officer.

Specifies that, to be eligible for a grant, a program must:

- be limited to enforcement of vehicular traffic signals only;
- issue citations for traffic signal violations through the mail only;
- operate photographic systems in a manner that the violating vehicle is identified by the photograph but the occupants of the vehicle are not; and
- provide that all records of convictions resulting from violations detected through the use of photographic systems contain a notation to that effect.

Also requires the commissioner to adopt standards for the design, specifications, and operation of photographic equipment operated by a city as part of the pilot program.

**Subd. 3. Effects of citation.** Provides that the statutory provisions that apply to arrests, citations, and convictions apply to citations written for a violation detected by photographic equipment operated with a grant under this section, except for those that by their terms do not apply.

**Subd. 4. Report.** Requires the commissioner to report by February 2, 2002, on the results of the pilot program.

**Subd. 5. Fine schedule.** Allows a city participating in the pilot program to establish a schedule of fines for violations.

**Subd. 6. Appropriation.** Appropriates an unspecified amount from the general fund to the commissioner of public safety for the purposes of this section.

**Effective date.** August 1, 2000, for offenses committed on or after that date.