



Media Release – Alberta Municipalities Questions GoA’s Continued ATE Freeze

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EDMONTON – Alberta Municipalities (previously known as AUMA) recognises the Government of Alberta’s efforts in reviewing our members’ use of automated traffic enforcement (ATE) tools. We appreciate the work conducted to compile and standardise the practises of the 27 municipalities who diligently apply ATE to keep their communities safe.

Alberta Municipalities is disappointed the Government of Alberta has extended the freeze on the judicious use of photo radar. Two years ago, the government told municipalities to freeze their plans for expanding the use of ATE equipment while it conducted a review of how the traffic safety tools were being applied.

Having now completed its two-year review, the government is forcing a continuation of the freeze without providing a clear reason.

“The 27 municipalities prudently using ATE have been transparent about their application and have consistently published the data that show the resulting safety improvements”, said Alberta Municipalities’ President, Cathy Heron. “We thank the Ministry of Justice & Solicitor General and the Ministry of Transportation for recognising this and formalising ATE usage guidelines that align with the things our members’ are already doing.”

Jeopardising the Safety of Road-users

Community safety is a primary objective of Alberta’s municipalities. The University of Alberta (U of A) researched photo radar use, analysing City of Edmonton-provided data to show [ATE is effective in reducing severe traffic collisions](#). [Another U of A paper](#) found a 20% reduction in severe collisions, while an Australian study found a 30% reduction in fatal collisions thanks to ATE.

The province’s own annual statistics for 2016 show nearly one-quarter of drivers in fatal collisions were reported as travelling at an unsafe speed. By extending for a third year the freeze on replacing or upgrading automated traffic safety equipment, the government is unnecessarily complicating the efforts of municipalities to make Alberta’s roads safer.

There is No ‘Cash-Grab’ by Municipalities

The government’s actions against traffic safety equipment started in February, 2019 when the Alberta NDP’s Minister of Transportation, Brian Mason introduced tighter regulations on the use of photo radar. Subsequently, after calling photo radar fines a ‘cash grab’, the UCP government increased their take of ATE penalties from 26.7% to 40%, increasing GoA revenues by \$37 million annually.

A [government report](#) from 2019 showed that more than half of the \$220 million ATE fines issued during the 2016 - 2017 calendar went to municipalities (\$130 million). Edmonton received \$50.8 million in 2017 – this represents less than 2% of their 2017 budget. Calgary received \$38.1 million, slightly more than 1.1% of their budget. Municipalities recognize that photo radar is only one tool of many to promote traffic safety, so the funds received from photo radar are reinvested in other traffic safety programs.

No Clear Reason for Extension

“The government has said it wants our members to have a year to adjust to the government’s guidelines - things municipalities are already doing. Yet, ATE makes our communities safer and the funds derived from penalties are applied to other traffic safety activities. So, we don’t understand why the province has decided to extend the freeze on replacing or upgrading automated traffic safety equipment”, said President Heron.

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