



MAYOR REX RICHARDSON
CITY OF LONG BEACH

March 30, 2026

The Honorable Dave Cortese
California State Senate
Chair, Transportation Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 7520
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for SB 1279 (Gonzalez)—Extension of Automated Speed Enforcement on Pacific Coast Highway in Long Beach

Dear Senator Cortese,

On behalf of the City of Long Beach (City), the City is in strong support of SB 1279 (Gonzalez), which extends the City's authority to deploy up to six automated speed safety systems along the Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) to address ongoing speeding and safety challenges.

Long Beach's segment of PCH, spanning approximately 8.5 miles, constitutes less than 1% of the city's arterial road network, but accounts for nearly 20% of traffic fatalities. Since 2020, state highways within City limits, including PCH, have been the site of 52 out of 192 deaths in Long Beach, representing 27% of the city's crash fatalities. Heartbreaking incidents, involving pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers, occur with alarming frequency, illustrating the need for additional tools and resources to appropriately address this growing challenge.

Assembly Bill 645 (AB 645) authorized a limited pilot program for use of automated speed safety systems in six California cities, including the City of Long Beach, to address excessive speeding on high-injury corridors. However, AB 645 explicitly prohibits speed safety system devices from being operated on any California state routes, including PCH. SB 1279 addresses this limitation by allowing up to six speed safety systems along the limited section of PCH within the City's limits.

The additional speed safety systems authorized by SB 1279 will be subject to the same privacy and equity considerations established by AB 645. The system is designed to capture only the rear license plate of the violating vehicle and will not record the faces of drivers, passengers, or bystanders. No individual citation information will be shared with the Long Beach Police Department or other enforcement agencies.

Automated enforcement systems like those authorized by AB 645 are a critical tool in advancing local Safe Streets and Vision Zero goals, as speed is the most significant factor in determining the severity of a crash. Data from the National Traffic Speeds Survey, administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation, shows that at 20 miles per hour (MPH), there is only a 13% likelihood of a pedestrian fatality or severe injury, compared to 40% at 30 MPH and 73% at 40 MPH. By encouraging reduced speeds, automated enforcement directly lowers the risk of death and life-altering injuries, particularly for pedestrians and bicyclists who are most vulnerable and prevalent on this highly urbanized segment of the highway. Automated speed enforcement systems

also utilize warning and speed feedback signage to focus on prevention rather than punishment, creating safer streets for all users, and ensuring more consistent compliance with speed limits than traditional enforcement methods alone.

This approach also allows valuable law enforcement resources to be dedicated to higher-priority safety needs, while providing an equitable and transparent alternative to discretionary traffic stops. Importantly, automated systems complement, rather than replace, road design and education efforts, helping to address speeding on corridors where engineering changes may be cost-prohibitive or take years to implement.

The PCH corridor includes many vibrant small businesses, cultural districts, homes, and several parks that attract young people, families, and older adults. Several schools, including Long Beach Community College, are either on, or within walking distance of PCH, creating significant pedestrian and bicycle activity alongside vehicles consistently traveling at unsafe speeds. The PCH corridor is designed with curb-adjacent lanes and has no shoulders between vehicles and pedestrians. Each day, thousands of motorists travelling over 40mph pass within a few feet of these pedestrians. In addition to the immediate safety concerns associated with speeding, unsafe driving behaviors erode the overall character of the corridor, creating an environment that is less welcoming and not reflective of the communities surrounding PCH. The highway has been widened with additional lanes intended to benefit external populations passing through our community, exposing our residents to excessive noise and elevated risk of severe injury.

SB 1279 helps close a dangerous policy gap and adds to existing City efforts to prevent inequitable traffic conditions. Every fatal or serious collision comes at a human cost — not a statistic or a number, but a real person. The additional speed safety systems will ensure every individual utilizing PCH in Long Beach arrives at their school, work, or home safely. For these reasons, the City of Long Beach respectfully urges your support for SB 1279.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rex Richardson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rex Richardson
Mayor of Long Beach