

1/19/2008

Arizona Speed Cameras Expect \$165 Million Annual Revenue

One-tenth of the Arizona state budget deficit will be covered by photo radar profit by 2010. Governor calls for HOV lane cameras.

Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano announced on Friday her expectation that the state's new freeway speed cameras would generate \$90 million in net profit for fiscal year 2009, plus \$34 million for the private companies selected to operate the program. In the following year, what the state labels "non tax increase revenue generation" will jump to \$120 million, plus \$45 million more for the ticket vendors, for a total of \$165 million. After 2010 revenue is expected to exceed this amount significantly as the program grows beyond 100 fixed and mobile speed cameras and high occupancy vehicle lane (HOV) ticketing cameras are brought online. The state currently faces a \$1.3 billion deficit.



"This budget shortfall is an opportunity to make government more efficient and effective," Napolitano said in a statement touting a budget that "does not raise taxes."

Napolitano had [ordered a state takeover](#) of Scottsdale's automated ticketing pilot project after noting that six cameras there generated 110,962 tickets worth \$17 million in 2006. Australian vendor Redflex was chosen to operate the state's photo radar van pilot project while ATS beat its down-under rival for the right to issue tickets with fixed cameras in Scottsdale. A study documented a 54 percent increase in rear-end collisions and a 9 percent increase in injuries from rear-end collisions as a result of the cameras' use.

Although Napolitano has been consistent in maintaining the primary motivation for the program has been traffic safety, her budget called for an expansion of camera ticketing into traffic offenses that do not endanger other motorists. The document released Friday asked the legislature to modify state law to "allow for the possible use of photo enforcement systems to detect violations of high-occupancy vehicle lane restrictions." [This new technology](#) would use infrared cameras to peer into motorist vehicles and mail a ticket to the owner of any vehicle not thought to be carrying the number of passengers required for travel in a carpool lane.

"Prompt enactment and implementation of the new highway photo enforcement legislation would provide revenue needed for responding to growing needs," the FY09 budget summary explained.

Insurance companies such as the American Automobile Association (AAA) have backed Arizona's speed camera program. Each photo ticket in the state carries license points allowing insurance companies to raise rates on ticket recipients, generating hundreds of millions in additional revenue. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety has also called for expansion of photo ticketing programs nationwide.