

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 2559

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 5, 2026

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 2559 (1R).

As amended, the bill allows the New Jersey Transit Corporation (corporation) to install and operate bus obstruction monitoring systems on buses owned or operated by the corporation, or operated under contract with the corporation, to capture recorded images of motor vehicles during the commission of a covered violation and to issue warnings and citations for covered violations as evidenced by recorded images captured by bus obstruction monitoring systems. The bill requires an officer with the New Jersey Transit Police Department (department), or an employee, consultant, or contractor of the corporation that has been designated, trained, and certified by the corporation, to review recorded images of covered violations. The number of buses to be equipped with bus obstruction monitoring systems is to be at the discretion of the corporation based on public interest and the corporation's operational and safety needs. Under the bill, a bus obstruction monitoring system may only be used if it is operated by a bus obstruction monitoring system operator and a sign is affixed to the bus alerting drivers that the bus is equipped with a bus obstruction monitoring system.

Under the bill, a bus obstruction monitoring system is to only retain recorded images of motor vehicles that contain evidence of a covered violation. Recorded images from a bus obstruction monitoring system may be retained for up to six months or 60 days after final disposition of the citation, whichever is later, if the record images contain evidence of a covered violation. If the recorded images do not contain evidence of a covered violation, the recorded images are to be destroyed within 30 days of the recorded images' capture. Recorded images are to be stored on secure servers or encrypted digital storage systems that meet or exceed State information security standards established by the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness. Under the bill, recorded images are not deemed a government record and are not to be discoverable as a government record by any person, entity, or

governmental agency, except upon a subpoena issued by a grand jury or a court order in a criminal matter. Additionally, recorded images may not be offered as evidence in any civil or administrative proceeding not directly related to a covered violation. Additionally, recorded images are not to be accessible by other systems and networks outside of the bus obstruction monitoring system and network used by the corporation, including, but not limited to, automatic license plate reader systems and any networks associated with automatic license plate reader systems. However, the corporation is still permitted to access recorded images for use on the corporation's own secure systems and networks. A bus obstruction monitoring system is prohibited from using biometric identification techniques, including facial recognition technology.

Under the bill, a bus obstruction monitoring system operator is required to complete training established or approved by the corporation in the procedures for setting up, testing, and operating the bus obstruction monitoring system. The corporation is required to maintain records demonstrating a bus obstruction monitoring system operator's completion of the required training for the duration of a bus obstruction monitoring system operator's service in operating a bus obstruction monitoring system for the corporation and for one year thereafter. In addition, a bus obstruction monitoring system operator is required to perform manufacturer-specified functionality tests of each bus obstruction monitoring system prior to the start of daily service and at regular intervals throughout the day, as required by the manufacturer. Each test is to confirm proper operation of the camera, time and date stamp, location tracking, and image capture functions. A bus obstruction monitoring system operator is also required to complete and sign a test verification log for each bus obstruction monitoring system, which log is to meet certain requirements under the bill.

Under the bill, no motor vehicle is permitted to stop, stand, or park in a bus stop zone. Citations issued by a bus obstruction monitoring system for a covered violation may be contested on certain grounds provided in the bill. An owner or operator of a motor vehicle who received a citation for a covered violation has 30 days from the date on which the citation was mailed to contest the alleged covered violation to the corporation. After reviewing a contested citation, the corporation is to notify the owner or operator in writing of its final decision on whether the citation is dismissed or upheld. If the citation is upheld, the corporation is required to provide instructions for the owner's or operator's options to either pay the fine or appeal the corporation's decision. An owner or operator contesting a citation may appeal a final decision issued by the corporation to the New Jersey Superior Court. Under the bill, owners and operators are to be jointly liable for a citation issued by a bus obstruction monitoring system for a covered violation unless

the owner can demonstrate to the corporation that the motor vehicle was used without the owner's express or implied consent. An owner who pays any fines, costs, or administrative fees in connection with a citation may recover that sum from the operator in a court of competent jurisdiction.

If an owner or operator of a motor vehicle violates the bill's provisions, as captured by a bus obstruction monitoring system, the owner or operator of the motor vehicle is to be issued either a warning or a fine of \$45 for the offense. Subsequent offenses within a 12-month period are to increase by \$45, with a maximum fine of \$135 per offense. The corporation is required to retain any fines collected to cover administrative costs of administering the bus obstruction monitoring system program and any excess revenue from the fines collected is to be used to fund Access Link services. Additionally, the corporation is prohibited from entering into any agreement for bus obstruction monitoring systems or bus obstruction monitoring system operator services that bases contractor compensation on the amount of revenue generated in monetary fines collected. If an owner or operator has failed to pay three or more fines, the corporation may notify the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission (commission) in writing. Upon receiving such notice, the commission may suspend the registration of the motor vehicle associated with the commission of the covered violations for which the citations were issued and three or more fines were not paid or otherwise satisfied. However, after issuing such notice, if the fines are subsequently paid or if the case is dismissed or otherwise disposed of, the corporation is to promptly notify the commission of the subsequent payment, dismissal, or disposal.

The corporation is also required to conduct a public education and awareness campaign regarding the corporation's implementation of the bus obstruction monitoring system program for a period of 180 days beginning on the date of implementation of the bus obstruction monitoring system program. The campaign is to include, but not be limited to, web-based and social media outreach.

In addition, the corporation is required to issue warning notices prior to issuing any citations or fines for covered violations for 90 days following the implementation of the bus obstruction monitoring system program and is only permitted to issue warning notices for a period of 45 days following the implementation of a new bus route that uses buses equipped with bus obstruction monitoring systems. The corporation is required to submit an annual report to the Governor and to the Legislature regarding the bus obstruction monitoring system, which report is to include certain information outlined in the bill.

Finally, the bill establishes a two-year pilot program that is to be identical to and is to comply with all of the provisions of the bus obstruction monitoring system program. However, bus obstruction

monitoring systems operating under the pilot program are to only capture recorded images of motor vehicles stopping, standing, or parking in a bicycle lane adjacent to a roadway that serves a motorbus regular route in a county of the first class having a population density of more than 10,000 people per square mile, unless otherwise permitted under law or in the event of an emergency.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

(1) revise the definition of “covered violation” to only include stopping, standing, or parking in a bus stop zone, instead of also including a dedicated bus lane and designated bicycle lane;

(2) remove the defined terms “dedicated bus lane” and “designated bicycle lane”;

(3) revise the definition of “recorded image” to clarify that a recorded image is a video, photograph, or extracted still image that is of sufficient quality and clarity to show whether a motor vehicle’s hazard warning lights were activated at the time the digital video, photograph, or extracted still image was recorded;

(4) permit, instead of require, the corporation to install and operate bus obstruction monitoring systems;

(5) remove a requirement that only an officer with the New Jersey Transit Police Department that has been designated, trained, and certified by the department can review recorded images to determine whether a covered violation has occurred. Under the bill as amended, an officer or employee, consultant, or contractor of the corporation who has been designated, trained, and certified by the corporation to review recorded images of covered violations are to review recorded images to determine whether a covered violation occurred;

(6) clarify that the number of buses equipped with bus obstruction monitoring systems, as well as the selection of routes and deployment locations, is to be at the discretion of the corporation based on public interest and the corporation’s operational and safety needs, rather than based on a cost-benefit analysis, anticipated impact on motorbus regular route service efficiency, safety and rider accessibility, predicted violation frequency, and overall operational feasibility;

(7) change the date by which recorded images from a bus obstruction monitoring system are to be destroyed from 15 days to 30 days after the recorded images were first captured if the recorded images do not contain evidence of a covered violation;

(8) provide that recorded images from a bus obstruction monitoring system are not to be accessible by other systems and networks outside of the bus obstruction monitoring system and any network used by the corporation, including, but not limited, to automatic license plate reader systems and any networks associated

with automatic license plate reader systems but provide that the corporation is still permitted to access recorded images for use on its own secure systems and networks;

(9) prohibit a bus obstruction monitoring system from using biometric identification techniques;

(10) require that the training for a bus obstruction monitoring system operator be established or approved by the corporation, instead of by the manufacturer of the bus obstruction monitoring system;

(11) remove a requirement that after training, the manufacturer issue a signed certificate to the operator and remove a requirement that the certificate be retained and be admissible as evidence in administrative or judicial proceedings related to a covered violation;

(12) require the corporation to maintain records demonstrating a bus obstruction monitoring system operator's completion of the required training for the duration of a bus obstruction monitoring system operator's service in operating a bus obstruction monitoring system for the corporation and for one year thereafter;

(13) require that the test verification log be retained by the corporation for one year after the log's creation or until the final disposition of any related citation for a covered violation, whichever is later. Prior to amendment, the bill required the designated contractor of the corporation to retain the log and make the log available upon request for administrative review or legal proceedings;

(14) require that the log, in addition to being admissible as evidence in court proceedings related to a covered violation, also be admissible as evidence in any administrative proceeding related to a covered violation;

(15) require the owner or operator of a motor vehicle to provide documentation when contesting a covered violation under certain circumstances;

(16) remove a requirement that, when contesting a covered violation, an owner is to provide a police report for a motor vehicle reported stolen at the time of the covered violation and, instead, require the owner or operator to provide documentation of the claim;

(17) include additional grounds for contesting covered violations;

(18) remove a provision allowing a citation to be contested through the corporation's Internet website, by mail, or by requesting a hearing and establish a new requirement that to contest a citation, an owner or operator is required to send written notice to the corporation that the owner or operator is seeking to contest the citation, which notice is required to also state the owner's or operator's reason for contesting the citation and include sufficient documentation;

(19) remove a requirement that, after reviewing a contested citation, the corporation is required to send a copy of its final decision to the registered owner contesting the citation and, instead, require the corporation to notify the owner or operator in writing of its final

decision on whether the citation is dismissed or upheld. If the decision is upheld, the corporation is required to provide instructions for the owner or operator to either pay the fine or appeal the decision;

(20) provide that, on appeal, if the court finds in favor of the owner or operator, the court may award court costs and attorneys' fees;

(21) provide that owners and operators are to be jointly liable for a citation issued by a bus obstruction monitoring system for a covered violation unless the owner can demonstrate to the corporation that the motor vehicle was used without the owner's express or implied consent and that an owner who pays any fines, costs, or administrative fees in connection with a citation may recover that sum from the operator in a court of competent jurisdiction;

(22) require that a citation issued by the corporation for a covered violation captured by a bus obstruction monitoring system be sent by mail to the owner or operator of the motor vehicle within 30 calendar days of the date of the covered violation. Previously, the bill required citations to be sent to owners within 15 calendar days of the date of the covered violation;

(23) revise the fine structure so that a warning or a fine of \$45 is to be imposed for an offense, instead of a \$45 fine for the first offense, and clarify that a fine of \$45 may be imposed for an offense occurring more than 12 months after the last offense;

(24) clarify that if an owner or operator has failed to pay three or more fines, the corporation may notify the commission in writing, instead of in a form and manner prescribed by the commission;

(25) allow the commission to suspend the registration of the motor vehicle associated with the covered violations for which citations were issued, rather than the registration and driver's license, and if three or more fines were not paid or otherwise satisfied;

(26) require, instead of permit, the corporation to use any fines collected to cover the administrative costs of administering the bus obstruction monitoring system program;

(27) remove a requirement that the public education and awareness campaign include bus exterior advertising and press events;

(28) require the corporation to only issue warning notices for a period of 45 days following the implementation of any new bus route that uses buses equipped with bus obstruction monitoring systems;

(29) require, prior to issuing any citations or fines for covered violations, the corporation to only issue warning notices for a period of 90 days, which period is to begin on the date of implementation of the program rather than 90 days after the date of implementation;

(30) require that, as part of the report the corporation is to submit to the Governor and the Legislature, the number of citations dismissed by the corporation or successfully contested on appeal broken down by the reason for which the citation was dismissed or successfully contested and a written description of all system,

technical, administrative process, and legal issues associated with the program for that year;

(31) require the rules and regulations the corporation is required to adopt and promulgate to include training and certification of the employees, consultants, contractors, and officers who have been designated to review covered violations for the corporation;

(32) establish a two-year pilot program that is identical to and complies with all of the provisions of the bus obstruction monitoring system program, except that the systems under the pilot program are to only capture recorded images of motor vehicles stopping, standing, or parking in certain bicycle lanes in a county of the first class having a population density of more than 10,000 people per square mile, unless otherwise permitted under law or in the event of an emergency;

(33) revise the bill's synopsis; and

(34) make other technical and clarifying changes.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Fiscal information for this bill is currently unavailable.