

# Texas DOT Camera Report Seriously Flawed!

By Greg Mauz

“Analysis on the Effectiveness of Photographic Traffic Signal Enforcement Systems in Texas” contains more integrity problems than almost any report I have ever analyzed concerning red-light [ticket] cameras.

Biases and conflicts of interest abound. Texas DOT is blatantly pro-camera. Their web site reads like a camera company sales brochure. The Links page connects only to groups profiting from photo enforcement, including camera companies. The author of the report – Troy Walden of the Texas Transportation Institute – is a former police officer with no prior camera enforcement experience. Then there’s the data collection. The crash data was provided solely by the people profiting from the ticket cameras. No double checking occurred.

The first 7 pages, of the 39 page report, blather on in a blatantly sensationalistic attempt to sell the “need” for cameras. Every driver is a dangerous maniac without regard for life or limb. **I found 5 serious misrepresentations in the first paragraph!** Examples include: *“Intersection crashes constitute 35% of the national fatalities with 22% of all urban crashes being a direct result of drivers disobeying red signals (NHTSA, 2005).”* Objective research would read: Signal-related at 7% (2,950 of 39,189) fatal crashes (NHTSA, 2005) and RLV crashes comprise 2-4% of all urban fatalities. *“Economic loss from RLV crashes is estimated to be \$14 billion.”* Try \$4 billion at most, which is less than 2% of the national total (\$240 billion). For the record: Less than 6% of drivers crash in any given year. So much for mayhem.

Only 56 intersections from 10 camera enforced cities were evaluated. That leaves 45 cities omitted from the report. In fact, a convenient loophole protects these programs from proper scrutiny. Only RLTC programs started in 2008 are required to report before camera crash data. Various Texas media have reported serious crash increases after cameras in Lubbock (+50% RLV), Harlingen (+33%), Plano, Houston, and Burleson (+33% fatalities). ***In fact, if Lubbock’s crash increases were added to this report it would cancel all implied positive results.*** See: “Camera Fraud Invades Texas” for a comprehensive analysis of ticket cameras in the Lone Star state.

The intersections crash analyses were invalid one year to the next comparisons with incomplete data provided by biased guesswork. There were NO control sites, regression to the mean checks or mention of injuries and/or fatalities. No traffic counts were provided. Normally not a concern except that 2008 vehicle miles travelled dropped dramatically due to the surge in gas prices.

The report claims annualized crashes dropped from 586 to 413 or -30%. Angle crashes allegedly decreased -43%. **Many angle crashes are NOT RLV related.** Rear-end crashes supposedly only increased by 5%. Most studies average +70% increases. Thirty seven

intersections reported crash decreases, 17 reported increases and 2 no changes. Camera promoters promise “dramatic reductions” every-where, NOT mixed, inconclusive results. The author even admits that the omitted and limited data did NOT conclusively show that ticket cameras reduced crashes.

Note: At least 20 intersections recorded less than 5 total annual crashes before cameras. Eight had only two crashes or less! These intersections DO NOT even remotely qualify as dangerous. This documents further proof that RLTCs are only about money.

There are now over 20 independent studies (many with 4 years plus data, control sites, etc.) that recorded serious crash increases with injuries and fatalities. I provided a dozen of these to Tx DOT in 2007 yet, NOT even one of these studies results are recorded in their report. In fact, of 16 references, 15 profited from promoting red light ticket cameras. Hardly objective research.

Furthermore, no mention was made of at least 10 engineering improvement studies that trump even the fantasy results of camera company sales brochures. Adding +1 second of yellow time reduces violations by 40-75% AND reduces crashes by 30-50% (TTI, Detroit, San Francisco, Mesa, AZ; etc.). **The truth is: proper, longer yellows make cameras obsolete (Dallas, Mesa, VA).**

This misleading report was clearly funded by the DOT to protect the status quo – the unethical usurping of millions of dollars from the public by government and special interests. The Sunset Commission needs to purge the political/corporate corruption from the DOT. To restore integrity to Texas, the legislature must pass a bill banning all ticket cameras in the upcoming 2009 session.

Greg Mauz of the National Motorists Association has written 3 large, objective RLTC Reports ([www.motorists.org/mauz.php](http://www.motorists.org/mauz.php)) or 325-896-2595