

*Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs*



*Testimony*

*Local Police Use of Radar*

*House Transportation Committee*

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*Chuck Mummert, Elizabethtown Borough  
Mayor and PSAB 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President*

*PSAB Department of Government Affairs  
800-232-7722, Ext. 1021 / Fax 717-236-8289  
[www.boroughs.org](http://www.boroughs.org)*

Good Morning Chairman Micozzie and Democratic Chairman McGeehan and other members of the House Transportation Committee. On behalf of Elizabethtown Borough, the Lancaster County Boroughs Association and the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs, I am honored to have the opportunity to talk to you about this important traffic safety issue.

The Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs (PSAB) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan local government association representing the interests of 957 boroughs and more than 10,000 elected and appointed borough officials. More than 2.6 million residents reside in Pennsylvania boroughs. For more than 100 years, PSAB has helped to shape the laws that govern boroughs and municipal officials across the state.

For more than a decade, PSAB has advocated for our local police to be permitted to use radar in our communities. Over the years, the Lancaster County Boroughs Association has adopted numerous resolutions urging the Legislature to allow Pennsylvania local police the ability to use the same speed timing equipment that Pennsylvania State Police are permitted to use.

We are optimistic that both House Bill 1272 and Senate Bill 1340 will be given full scrutiny and bipartisan support. While this issue has been controversial, I hope that this will be the year that the legislature votes to put equity into local police enforcement procedures and operations.

It is somewhat disconcerting that in 2014, Pennsylvania remains the only state in the country that cannot use the important device. Like other police departments around the country, our local police can put themselves in the line of duty, they carry guns and tasers and they make arrests. Yet, unlike other police officers, the General Assembly does not permit them to use this simple, life-saving device.

Pennsylvania has long held the distinction of being the state with the third highest number of speed-related vehicle fatalities in the country. In fact, the vast majority of speeding-related fatalities happen on roads that are **not** interstate highways. The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration's fatality data shows that 47 percent of speed-related fatalities occurred on roads posted at 50 miles per hour or less, and more than 20 percent occurred on roads posted at 35 miles per hour or less.

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, there were 455 speeding-related deaths in the years 2012 and 2013. Those lost lives were our residents, neighbors, friends and constituents.

And while speeding is one of the most prevalent causes of traffic crashes, with accurate enforcement, it can be one of the most preventable. Speeding-related crashes cost billions of dollars and cause thousands of deaths.

To help curb speeding in our communities, our police need the most cost-effective and time-effective tools available. Radar is acknowledged by law enforcement personnel to be the safest,

most accurate, and most economical speed-timing device. Relying on stop watches to time drivers between two white lines is archaic and time consuming.

PSAB's Municipal Policy Statement cites the *"primary responsibility for law enforcement should rest at the local level. To carry out this responsibility effectively, municipalities must constantly seek to improve their law enforcement capability"*. PSAB's membership recognizes radar and other speed detection technologies as a vital resource in much needed traffic control and calming situations.

In closing, on behalf of Elizabethtown Borough, the Lancaster County Boroughs Association and the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs, I would urge the House to move this bill forward so that all full and part time local police officers, regardless of the size of the municipality are afforded the opportunity to equally enforce speed enforcement laws.

While previous bills have sought to limit the use of local police radar to communities over 40,000 residents, PSAB interprets this population requirement as restricting over 95 percent of Pennsylvania's municipalities from implementing radar programs.

Thank you for allowing me to present testimony and I welcome questions on this topic.