

March 12, 2026

The Honorable Marc A. Korman
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Michele J. Guyton
Vice-Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Written Testimony – HB 1522 (Traffic Control Signal Monitoring Systems – Exemptions From Liability – Vehicle Rental Companies); Position: Unfavorable

Dear Chair Korman, Vice-Chair Guyton, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony opposing HB 1522.

Let me begin by stating clearly that traffic enforcement systems play an important role in improving road safety. Automated enforcement technologies such as red-light cameras and speed monitoring systems can help deter dangerous driving behavior and protect both motorists and pedestrians. When used appropriately, these systems can be an effective tool for encouraging safer driving. For that reason, NextCar supports the use of all traffic enforcement cameras as part of broader efforts to improve road safety.

However, HB 1522 proposes repealing the exemption that currently protects car rental companies from liability for automated traffic citations. In doing so, the bill would place responsibility on the owner of the vehicle rather than on the individual who actually committed the violation.

The original exemption exists for a very practical reason: a rental car company owns the vehicle but does not control the driver. Once a renter takes possession of a vehicle, the rental company has no ability to monitor or influence how that person operates the vehicle on public roads. Holding the vehicle owner responsible in these cases places liability on the wrong party.

This raises an important policy question. What is the intended purpose of traffic enforcement cameras? If the purpose is simply to generate additional fines, then drastically increase fines and booting cars will achieve that outcome. But if the purpose is to change driver behavior and improve road safety, then accountability must be directed toward the individual who committed the violation.

A practical solution already exists. Rental companies maintain detailed records that identify the individual renting each vehicle at any given time. In fact, the state can change its current digital-to-paper process and make it completely digital. The State can ping my database and issue the citation to the driver immediately. This will both increase collection because the driver is less likely to dispute, and change the driver behavior because the driver knows immediately they are being held responsible. Providing rental companies with a reasonable period—such as 120 days—to identify the renter and transfer the citation to the responsible driver ensures that enforcement systems target the correct party.

This approach maintains the effectiveness of traffic enforcement programs while preserving fairness and accountability.

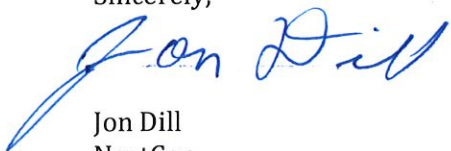
To put it simply:

My rental car does not run red lights — the driver does.

My rental car does not speed — the driver does.

If we want safer roads, accountability must follow the driver behind the wheel.

Sincerely,



Jon Dill
NextCar