

STATE OF NEW YORK

685

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

(Prefiled)

January 6, 2021

Introduced by Sen. HOYLMAN -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Consumer Protection

AN ACT to amend the general business law and the executive law, in relation to the use of automatic license plate reader systems

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The general business law is amended by adding a new section
2 397-b to read as follows:

3 § 397-b. Use of automatic license plate reader systems prohibited. As
4 used in this section: 1. "Automatic license plate reader system" or
5 "ALPR system" shall mean a system of one or more mobile or fixed high
6 speed cameras used in combination with computer algorithms to convert
7 images of license plates into computer-readable data.

8 2. It shall be unlawful for any business, individual, partnership,
9 corporation, association, or state or local government non-law enforce-
10 ment entity to use an automatic license plate reader system.

11 3. The provisions of this section shall not apply to an electronic
12 toll collection system or associated transaction system or any component
13 thereof which is operated by a public authority for the purpose of
14 imposing and collecting tolls on a roadway within the state.

15 4. A violation of the provisions of this section shall constitute a
16 violation, and upon conviction thereof shall be punishable by a term of
17 imprisonment not to exceed fifteen days, or by a fine of not more than
18 one thousand dollars, or by both such fine and imprisonment. Each unlaw-
19 fully installed or maintained device shall constitute a separate and
20 distinct violation.

21 § 2. The executive law is amended by adding a new section 837-w to
22 read as follows:

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 § 837-w. Use of automatic license plate readers by law enforcement
2 agencies. 1. The use of automatic license plate reader systems by state
3 and local law enforcement agencies shall be governed by this section.

4 (a) "Automatic license plate reader system" or "ALPR system" shall
5 mean a system of one or more mobile or fixed high speed cameras used in
6 combination with computer algorithms to convert images of license plates
7 into computer-readable data.

8 (b) "Captured plate data" shall mean the GPS coordinates, date and
9 time, photograph, license plate number, and any other data captured by
10 or derived from any ALPR system.

11 (c) "Secured area" shall mean an area, enclosed by clear boundaries,
12 to which access is limited and entry is only obtainable through specific
13 access-control points.

14 2. (a) A state or local law enforcement agency may use an automatic
15 license plate reader for the immediate comparison of captured plate data
16 held by the registry of motor vehicles, the department of criminal
17 justice information services, the national crime information center, the
18 FBI kidnappings and missing persons list, and the New York state AMBER
19 alert plan for the purpose of identifying:

20 (i) outstanding parking or traffic violations;

21 (ii) a violation of vehicle registration requirements;

22 (iii) a vehicle in violation of inspection requirements;

23 (iv) a stolen vehicle or stolen license plate;

24 (v) a vehicle registered to an individual for whom there is an
25 outstanding default or arrest warrant for felony charges; or

26 (vi) a vehicle associated with a missing person.

27 (b) Automatic license plate readers may also be used: (i) by parking
28 enforcement entities for the regulation of public parking;

29 (ii) by state or local government agencies for the purpose of control-
30 ling access to secured areas; and

31 (iii) by the department of transportation or a public authority, for
32 the purpose of electronic toll collection.

33 3. (a) Captured plate data obtained for the purposes described under
34 this section shall not be used or shared for any other purpose and shall
35 not be preserved for more than one hundred eighty days except pursuant
36 to a preservation or disclosure request under this subdivision, or a
37 warrant. Captured plate data may be maintained within the custody and
38 control of a law enforcement agency for a longer time period if the data
39 is retained or stored as part of an ongoing investigation, and in such
40 case the data shall be destroyed at the conclusion of either (i) an
41 investigation that does not result in any criminal charges being filed;
42 or (ii) any criminal action undertaken in the matter involving the
43 captured plate data.

44 (b) Upon the request of any law enforcement agency, an operator of an
45 ALPR system shall take all necessary steps to immediately preserve
46 captured plate data in its possession. A requesting agency must specify
47 in a written sworn statement: (i) the particular camera or cameras for
48 which captured plate data must be preserved or the particular license
49 plate for which captured plate data must be preserved; and (ii) the date
50 or dates and timeframes for which captured plate data must be preserved.

51 (c) A law enforcement agency may apply for a court order for disclo-
52 sure of captured plate data which shall be issued by any court of compe-
53 tent jurisdiction if the agency offers specific and articulable facts
54 showing that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the captured
55 plate data is relevant and material to an ongoing criminal or missing
56 persons investigation.

1 (d) Captured plate data shall be destroyed by the operator of the ALPR
2 system if the application for a disclosure order is denied or at the end
3 of fourteen days, whichever is later.

4 4. Entities authorized to use ALPR systems under subdivision two of
5 this section shall not sell, trade, or exchange captured plate data for
6 any purpose.

7 5. An alert from an ALPR system used by a law enforcement agency does
8 not constitute reasonable suspicion or probable cause to perform a traf-
9 fic stop. If an ALPR system alerts on a plate, a law enforcement officer
10 must visually confirm that the plate number and state of origin match
11 the alert before taking law enforcement action.

12 6. Law enforcement agencies that use ALPR systems shall:

13 (a) Adopt a policy governing use of the system and conspicuously post
14 the policy on the entity's web site;

15 (b) Adopt a privacy policy to ensure that captured plate data is not
16 shared in violation of this section or any other law and conspicuously
17 post the privacy policy on the agency's web site; and

18 (c) Report annually its automatic license plate reader practices and
19 usage to the division, and conspicuously post the report on the entity's
20 web site. The report shall include:

21 (i) the number of license plates scanned;

22 (ii) the number of preservation requests;

23 (iii) the number of disclosure orders;

24 (iv) any changes in policy that affect privacy concerns;

25 (v) the names of the lists against which captured plate data was
26 checked, and for each list the number of confirmed matches;

27 (vi) the number of disclosure orders resulting in criminal charges,
28 and the number of such charges resulting in conviction;

29 (vii) the total number of automatic license plate readers being oper-
30 ated by the agency;

31 (viii) the number of automatic license plate reader readings being
32 retained;

33 (ix) the number of requests made for automatic license plate reader
34 data, including (A) the number of requests that resulted in the release
35 of information; (B) the number of out-of-state requests; (C) the number
36 of federal requests; (D) the number of out-of-state requests that
37 resulted in a release of information; and

38 (x) any data breaches or unauthorized uses of the automatic license
39 plate reader database.

40 7. Any plate data captured or improperly maintained shall not be
41 introduced by the state in any grand jury or criminal proceeding or in
42 any civil or administrative proceeding brought by the state or any
43 government office or official. The state shall disclose to the defense
44 the existence and the contents of any such captured data. A criminal
45 defendant shall be entitled to introduce evidence of captured data,
46 however obtained and maintained, in his or her defense. An individual
47 whose rights have been violated by the improper capture or maintenance
48 of plate data may introduce evidence concerning that plate data in a
49 civil action or may grant permission to another party in a civil
50 proceeding to introduce such evidence.

51 8. (a) Any aggrieved person may institute a civil action to restrain
52 any violation of this section. If, in any such action, a willful
53 violation is found to have occurred, the violator shall not be entitled
54 to claim any privilege absolute or qualified, and he or she shall, in
55 addition to any liability for such actual damages as may be shown, be
56 liable for exemplary damages of not less than one hundred and not more

1 than one thousand dollars for each violation, together with costs and
2 reasonable attorneys' fees and disbursements incurred by the person
3 bringing the action.

4 (b) Any employee of a law enforcement agency authorized to utilize an
5 ALPR system who violates the provisions of this section prohibiting the
6 use, sale, dissemination or other distribution of license plate data for
7 other than legitimate law enforcement purposes shall be guilty of a
8 misdemeanor punishable by a sentence of imprisonment not exceeding one
9 year or a fine not exceeding ten thousand dollars or by both such fine
10 and imprisonment.

11 9. Captured plate data shall be considered personal data. Captured
12 plate data may only be disclosed to, or with the prior written consent
13 of, the person to whom the vehicle is registered; provided, however,
14 that upon presentation to an operator of an ALPR system of a valid,
15 current abuse prevention order protecting the driver of a vehicle joint-
16 ly registered with or registered solely in the name of the individual
17 against whom the order was issued, captured plate data may not be
18 disclosed except pursuant to a disclosure order or as the result of a
19 match.

20 § 3. This act shall take effect immediately.