

5238--A

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I N S E N A T E

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Introduced by Sens. MURPHY, CARLUCCI, LARKIN -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Transportation -- recommitted to the Committee on Transportation in accordance with Senate Rule 6, sec. 8 -- reported favorably from said committee, ordered to first and second report, ordered to a third reading, amended and ordered reprinted, retaining its place in the order of third reading

AN ACT to amend the vehicle and traffic law and the public officers law, in relation to authorizing local authorities to establish demonstration programs, implementing railroad grade crossing monitoring systems by means of photo devices

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 Section 1. The vehicle and traffic law is amended by adding a new
2 section 135-a to read as follows:

3 S 135-A. RAILROAD GRADE CROSSING. A LOCATION WHERE RAILROAD TRACKS
4 INTERSECT A PUBLIC OR PRIVATE HIGHWAY, ROADWAY OR SIDEWALK.

5 S 2. The vehicle and traffic law is amended by adding a new section
6 1170-a to read as follows:

7 S 1170-A. OWNER LIABILITY FOR FAILURE OF OPERATOR TO OBEY SIGNAL INDI-
8 CATING APPROACH OF TRAIN. (A) 1. NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER PROVISION OF
9 LAW, ANY LOCAL AUTHORITY IS HEREBY AUTHORIZED AND EMPOWERED TO ADOPT AND
10 AMEND A LOCAL LAW, ORDINANCE OR RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A DEMONSTRATION
11 PROGRAM IMPOSING MONETARY LIABILITY ON THE OWNER OF A VEHICLE FOR FAIL-
12 URE OF AN OPERATOR THEREOF TO COMPLY WITH SECTION ELEVEN HUNDRED SEVENTY
13 OF THIS ARTICLE. SUCH DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM SHALL EMPOWER A LOCAL
14 AUTHORITY TO INSTALL AND OPERATE RAILROAD GRADE CROSSING PHOTO VIOLA-
15 TION-MONITORING DEVICES AT ANY RAILROAD SIGN OR SIGNAL.

16 2. SUCH DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM SHALL UTILIZE NECESSARY TECHNOLOGIES TO
17 ENSURE, TO THE EXTENT PRACTICABLE, THAT PHOTOGRAPHS PRODUCED BY SUCH
18 RAILROAD GRADE CROSSING PHOTO VIOLATION-MONITORING SYSTEMS SHALL NOT

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

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1 INCLUDE IMAGES THAT IDENTIFY THE DRIVER, THE PASSENGERS OR THE CONTENTS
2 OF THE VEHICLE. PROVIDED, HOWEVER, THAT NO NOTICE OF LIABILITY ISSUED
3 PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION SHALL BE DISMISSED SOLELY BECAUSE A PHOTOGRAPH
4 OR PHOTOGRAPHS ALLOW FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE CONTENTS OF A VEHI-
5 CLE, PROVIDED THAT SUCH LOCAL AUTHORITY HAS MADE A REASONABLE EFFORT TO
6 COMPLY WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THIS PARAGRAPH.

7 (B) WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF ANY SUCH LOCAL AUTHORITY WHICH HAS
8 ADOPTED A LOCAL LAW, ORDINANCE OR RESOLUTION PURSUANT TO SUBDIVISION (A)
9 OF THIS SECTION, THE OWNER OF A VEHICLE SHALL BE LIABLE FOR A PENALTY
10 IMPOSED PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION IF SUCH VEHICLE WAS USED OR OPERATED
11 WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE OWNER, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, IN VIOLATION OF
12 SECTION ELEVEN HUNDRED SEVENTY OF THIS ARTICLE, AND SUCH VIOLATION IS
13 EVIDENCED BY INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM A RAILROAD GRADE CROSSING PHOTO
14 VIOLATION-MONITORING SYSTEM; PROVIDED, HOWEVER, THAT NO OWNER OF A VEHI-
15 CLE SHALL BE LIABLE FOR A PENALTY IMPOSED PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION WHERE
16 THE OPERATOR OF SUCH VEHICLE HAS BEEN CONVICTED OF THE UNDERLYING
17 VIOLATION OF SECTION ELEVEN HUNDRED SEVENTY OF THIS ARTICLE.

18 (C) FOR PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION, "OWNER" SHALL HAVE THE MEANING
19 PROVIDED IN ARTICLE TWO-B OF THIS CHAPTER. FOR PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION,
20 "RAILROAD GRADE CROSSING PHOTO VIOLATION-MONITORING SYSTEM" SHALL MEAN A
21 VEHICLE SENSOR INSTALLED TO WORK IN CONJUNCTION WITH A RAILROAD SIGN OR
22 SIGNAL WHICH AUTOMATICALLY PRODUCES TWO OR MORE PHOTOGRAPHS, TWO OR MORE
23 MICROPHOTOGRAPHS, A VIDEOTAPE OR OTHER RECORDED IMAGES OF EACH VEHICLE
24 AT THE TIME IT IS USED OR OPERATED IN VIOLATION OF SECTION ELEVEN
25 HUNDRED SEVENTY OF THIS ARTICLE.

26 (D) A CERTIFICATE, SWORN TO OR AFFIRMED BY A TECHNICIAN EMPLOYED BY
27 THE LOCAL AUTHORITY IN WHICH THE CHARGED VIOLATION OCCURRED, OR A
28 FACSIMILE THEREOF, BASED UPON INSPECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS, MICROPHOTO-
29 GRAPHS, VIDEOTAPE OR OTHER RECORDED IMAGES PRODUCED BY A RAILROAD GRADE
30 CROSSING PHOTO VIOLATION-MONITORING SYSTEM, SHALL BE PRIMA FACIE
31 EVIDENCE OF THE FACTS CONTAINED THEREIN. ANY PHOTOGRAPHS, MICROPHOTO-
32 GRAPHS, VIDEOTAPE OR OTHER RECORDED IMAGES EVIDENCING SUCH A VIOLATION
33 SHALL BE AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION IN ANY PROCEEDING TO ADJUDICATE THE
34 LIABILITY FOR SUCH VIOLATION PURSUANT TO A LOCAL LAW, ORDINANCE OR
35 RESOLUTION ADOPTED PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION.

36 (E) AN OWNER LIABLE FOR A VIOLATION OF SECTION ELEVEN HUNDRED SEVENTY
37 OF THIS ARTICLE PURSUANT TO A LOCAL LAW, ORDINANCE OR RESOLUTION ADOPTED
38 PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION SHALL BE LIABLE FOR MONETARY PENALTIES IN
39 ACCORDANCE WITH A SCHEDULE OF FINES AND PENALTIES TO BE ESTABLISHED IN
40 SUCH LOCAL LAW, ORDINANCE OR RESOLUTION. THE LIABILITY OF THE OWNER
41 PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION SHALL NOT EXCEED ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS FOR EACH
42 VIOLATION; PROVIDED, HOWEVER, THAT AN ADJUDICATING AUTHORITY MAY PROVIDE
43 FOR AN ADDITIONAL PENALTY OF NOT IN EXCESS OF TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS FOR
44 EACH VIOLATION FOR THE FAILURE TO RESPOND TO A NOTICE OF LIABILITY WITH-
45 IN THE PRESCRIBED PERIOD OF TIME.

46 (F) AN IMPOSITION OF LIABILITY UNDER A LOCAL LAW, ORDINANCE OR RESOL-
47 UTION ADOPTED PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION SHALL NOT BE DEEMED A CONVICTION
48 AS AN OPERATOR AND SHALL NOT BE MADE PART OF THE OPERATING RECORD OF THE
49 PERSON UPON WHOM SUCH LIABILITY IS IMPOSED NOR SHALL IT BE USED FOR
50 INSURANCE PURPOSES IN THE PROVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLE INSURANCE COVERAGE.

51 (G) 1. A NOTICE OF LIABILITY SHALL BE SENT BY FIRST CLASS MAIL TO EACH
52 PERSON ALLEGED TO BE LIABLE AS AN OWNER FOR A VIOLATION OF SECTION ELEV-
53 EN HUNDRED SEVENTY OF THIS ARTICLE PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION. PERSONAL
54 DELIVERY ON THE OWNER SHALL NOT BE REQUIRED. A MANUAL OR AUTOMATIC
55 RECORD OF MAILING PREPARED IN THE ORDINARY COURSE OF BUSINESS SHALL BE
56 PRIMA FACIE EVIDENCE OF THE FACTS CONTAINED THEREIN.

1 2. A NOTICE OF LIABILITY SHALL CONTAIN THE NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE
2 PERSON ALLEGED TO BE LIABLE AS AN OWNER FOR A VIOLATION OF SECTION ELEV-
3 EN HUNDRED SEVENTY OF THIS ARTICLE PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION, THE REGIS-
4 TRATION NUMBER OF THE VEHICLE INVOLVED IN SUCH VIOLATION, THE LOCATION
5 WHERE SUCH VIOLATION TOOK PLACE, THE DATE AND TIME OF SUCH VIOLATION AND
6 THE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER OF THE CAMERA WHICH RECORDED THE VIOLATION OR
7 OTHER DOCUMENT LOCATOR NUMBER.

8 3. THE NOTICE OF LIABILITY SHALL CONTAIN INFORMATION ADVISING THE
9 PERSON CHARGED OF THE MANNER AND THE TIME IN WHICH HE OR SHE MAY CONTEST
10 THE LIABILITY ALLEGED IN THE NOTICE. SUCH NOTICE OF LIABILITY SHALL ALSO
11 CONTAIN A WARNING TO ADVISE THE PERSON CHARGED THAT FAILURE TO CONTEST
12 IN THE MANNER AND TIME PROVIDED SHALL BE DEEMED AN ADMISSION OF LIABIL-
13 ITY AND THAT A DEFAULT JUDGMENT MAY BE ENTERED THEREON.

14 4. THE NOTICE OF LIABILITY SHALL BE PREPARED AND MAILED BY THE LOCAL
15 AUTHORITY, OR BY ANY OTHER ENTITY AUTHORIZED BY SUCH LOCAL AUTHORITY TO
16 PREPARE AND MAIL SUCH NOTIFICATION OF VIOLATION.

17 (H) ADJUDICATION OF THE LIABILITY IMPOSED UPON OWNERS BY THIS SECTION
18 SHALL BE BY THE COURT HAVING JURISDICTION OVER TRAFFIC INFRACTIONS,
19 EXCEPT THAT IF SUCH LOCAL AUTHORITY HAS ESTABLISHED AN ADMINISTRATIVE
20 TRIBUNAL TO HEAR AND DETERMINE COMPLAINTS OF TRAFFIC INFRACTIONS CONSTI-
21 TUTING PARKING, STANDING OR STOPPING VIOLATIONS SUCH LOCAL AUTHORITY
22 MAY, BY LOCAL LAW, AUTHORIZE SUCH ADJUDICATION BY SUCH TRIBUNAL.

23 (I) IF AN OWNER RECEIVES A NOTICE OF LIABILITY PURSUANT TO THIS
24 SECTION FOR ANY TIME PERIOD DURING WHICH THE VEHICLE WAS REPORTED TO A
25 LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY AS HAVING BEEN STOLEN, IT SHALL BE A VALID
26 DEFENSE TO AN ALLEGATION OF LIABILITY FOR A VIOLATION OF SECTION ELEVEN
27 HUNDRED SEVENTY OF THIS ARTICLE PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION THAT THE VEHI-
28 CLE HAD BEEN REPORTED TO THE POLICE AS STOLEN PRIOR TO THE TIME THE
29 VIOLATION OCCURRED AND HAD NOT BEEN RECOVERED BY SUCH TIME. FOR PURPOSES
30 OF ASSERTING THE DEFENSE PROVIDED BY THIS SUBDIVISION IT SHALL BE SUFFI-
31 CIENT THAT A CERTIFIED COPY OF A POLICE REPORT ON THE STOLEN VEHICLE BE
32 SENT BY FIRST CLASS MAIL TO THE COURT HAVING JURISDICTION OR PARKING
33 VIOLATIONS BUREAU.

34 (J) 1. IN SUCH LOCAL AUTHORITY WHERE THE ADJUDICATION OF LIABILITY
35 IMPOSED UPON OWNERS PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION IS BY A COURT HAVING JURIS-
36 DICTION, AN OWNER WHO IS A LESSOR OF A VEHICLE TO WHICH A NOTICE OF
37 LIABILITY WAS ISSUED PURSUANT TO SUBDIVISION (G) OF THIS SECTION SHALL
38 NOT BE LIABLE FOR THE VIOLATION OF SECTION ELEVEN HUNDRED SEVENTY OF
39 THIS ARTICLE, PROVIDED THAT HE OR SHE SENDS TO THE COURT HAVING JURIS-
40 DICTION A COPY OF THE RENTAL, LEASE OR OTHER SUCH CONTRACT DOCUMENT
41 COVERING SUCH VEHICLE ON THE DATE OF THE VIOLATION, WITH THE NAME AND
42 ADDRESS OF THE LESSEE CLEARLY LEGIBLE, WITHIN THIRTY-SEVEN DAYS AFTER
43 RECEIVING NOTICE FROM THE COURT OF THE DATE AND TIME OF SUCH VIOLATION,
44 TOGETHER WITH THE OTHER INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE ORIGINAL NOTICE OF
45 LIABILITY. FAILURE TO SEND SUCH INFORMATION WITHIN SUCH THIRTY-SEVEN
46 DAY TIME PERIOD SHALL RENDER THE OWNER LIABLE FOR THE PENALTY PRESCRIBED
47 BY THIS SECTION. WHERE THE LESSOR COMPLIES WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THIS
48 PARAGRAPH, THE LESSEE OF SUCH VEHICLE ON THE DATE OF SUCH VIOLATION
49 SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE THE OWNER OF SUCH VEHICLE FOR PURPOSES OF THIS
50 SECTION, SHALL BE SUBJECT TO LIABILITY FOR THE VIOLATION OF SECTION
51 ELEVEN HUNDRED SEVENTY OF THIS ARTICLE PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION AND
52 SHALL BE SENT A NOTICE OF LIABILITY PURSUANT TO SUBDIVISION (G) OF THIS
53 SECTION.

54 2. (I) IN SUCH LOCAL AUTHORITY WHICH HAS AUTHORIZED THE ADJUDICATION
55 OF LIABILITY IMPOSED UPON OWNERS BY THIS SECTION BY A PARKING VIOLATIONS
56 BUREAU, AN OWNER WHO IS A LESSOR OF A VEHICLE TO WHICH A NOTICE OF

1 LIABILITY WAS ISSUED PURSUANT TO SUBDIVISION (G) OF THIS SECTION SHALL
2 NOT BE LIABLE FOR THE VIOLATION OF SECTION ELEVEN HUNDRED SEVENTY OF
3 THIS ARTICLE, PROVIDED THAT:

4 (A) PRIOR TO THE VIOLATION, THE LESSOR HAS FILED WITH THE BUREAU IN
5 ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION TWO HUNDRED THIRTY-NINE OF
6 THIS CHAPTER; AND

7 (B) WITHIN THIRTY-SEVEN DAYS AFTER RECEIVING NOTICE FROM THE BUREAU OF
8 THE DATE AND TIME OF A LIABILITY, TOGETHER WITH THE OTHER INFORMATION
9 CONTAINED IN THE ORIGINAL NOTICE OF LIABILITY, THE LESSOR SUBMITS TO THE
10 BUREAU THE CORRECT NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE LESSEE OF THE VEHICLE IDENTI-
11 FIED IN THE NOTICE OF LIABILITY AT THE TIME OF SUCH VIOLATION, TOGETHER
12 WITH SUCH OTHER ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE RENTAL, LEASE OR
13 OTHER CONTRACT DOCUMENT, AS MAY BE REASONABLY REQUIRED BY THE BUREAU
14 PURSUANT TO REGULATIONS THAT MAY BE PROMULGATED FOR SUCH PURPOSE.

15 (II) FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH CLAUSE (B) OF SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF THIS
16 PARAGRAPH SHALL RENDER THE OWNER LIABLE FOR THE PENALTY PRESCRIBED IN
17 THIS SECTION.

18 (III) WHERE THE LESSOR COMPLIES WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THIS PARAGRAPH,
19 THE LESSEE OF SUCH VEHICLE ON THE DATE OF SUCH VIOLATION SHALL BE DEEMED
20 TO BE THE OWNER OF SUCH VEHICLE FOR PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION, SHALL BE
21 SUBJECT TO LIABILITY FOR SUCH VIOLATION PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION AND
22 SHALL BE SENT A NOTICE OF LIABILITY PURSUANT TO SUBDIVISION (G) OF THIS
23 SECTION.

24 (K) 1. IF THE OWNER LIABLE FOR A VIOLATION OF SECTION ELEVEN HUNDRED
25 SEVENTY OF THIS ARTICLE PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION WAS NOT THE OPERATOR OF
26 THE VEHICLE AT THE TIME OF THE VIOLATION, THE OWNER MAY MAINTAIN AN
27 ACTION FOR INDEMNIFICATION AGAINST THE OPERATOR.

28 2. NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER PROVISION OF THIS SECTION, NO OWNER OF A
29 VEHICLE SHALL BE SUBJECT TO A MONETARY FINE IMPOSED PURSUANT TO THIS
30 SECTION IF THE OPERATOR OF SUCH VEHICLE WAS OPERATING SUCH VEHICLE WITH-
31 OUT THE CONSENT OF THE OWNER AT THE TIME SUCH OPERATOR FAILED TO OBEY A
32 RAILROAD SIGN OR SIGNAL INDICATING THE APPROACH OF A TRAIN. FOR
33 PURPOSES OF THIS SUBDIVISION THERE SHALL BE A PRESUMPTION THAT THE OPER-
34 ATOR OF SUCH VEHICLE WAS OPERATING SUCH VEHICLE WITH THE CONSENT OF THE
35 OWNER AT THE TIME SUCH OPERATOR FAILED TO OBEY A RAILROAD SIGN OR SIGNAL
36 INDICATING THE APPROACH OF A TRAIN.

37 (L) NOTHING IN THIS SECTION SHALL BE CONSTRUED TO LIMIT THE LIABILITY
38 OF AN OPERATOR OF A VEHICLE FOR ANY VIOLATION OF SECTION ELEVEN HUNDRED
39 SEVENTY OF THIS ARTICLE.

40 (M) IN ANY SUCH LOCAL AUTHORITY WHICH ADOPTS A DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM
41 PURSUANT TO SUBDIVISION (A) OF THIS SECTION, SUCH LOCAL AUTHORITY SHALL
42 SUBMIT AN ANNUAL REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF THE USE OF A RAILROAD GRADE
43 CROSSING PHOTO VIOLATION-MONITORING SYSTEM TO THE GOVERNOR, THE TEMPO-
44 RARY PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE ASSEMBLY ON OR
45 BEFORE JUNE FIRST, TWO THOUSAND EIGHTEEN AND ON THE SAME DATE IN EACH
46 SUCCEEDING YEAR IN WHICH THE DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM IS OPERABLE. SUCH
47 REPORT SHALL INCLUDE, BUT NOT BE LIMITED TO:

48 1. A DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCATIONS WHERE RAILROAD GRADE CROSSING PHOTO
49 VIOLATION-MONITORING SYSTEMS WERE USED;

50 2. THE AGGREGATE NUMBER, TYPE AND SEVERITY OF ACCIDENTS REPORTED AT
51 INTERSECTIONS WHERE A RAILROAD GRADE CROSSING PHOTO VIOLATION-MONITORING
52 SYSTEM IS USED FOR THE YEAR PRECEDING THE INSTALLATION OF SUCH SYSTEM,
53 TO THE EXTENT THE INFORMATION IS MAINTAINED BY THE DEPARTMENT;

54 3. THE AGGREGATE NUMBER, TYPE AND SEVERITY OF ACCIDENTS REPORTED AT
55 INTERSECTIONS WHERE A RAILROAD GRADE CROSSING PHOTO VIOLATION-MONITORING

1 SYSTEM IS USED, TO THE EXTENT THE INFORMATION IS MAINTAINED BY THE
2 DEPARTMENT;

3 4. THE NUMBER OF VIOLATIONS RECORDED AT EACH INTERSECTION WHERE A
4 RAILROAD GRADE CROSSING PHOTO VIOLATION-MONITORING SYSTEM IS USED AND IN
5 THE AGGREGATE ON A DAILY, WEEKLY AND MONTHLY BASIS;

6 5. THE TOTAL NUMBER OF NOTICES OF LIABILITY ISSUED FOR VIOLATIONS
7 RECORDED BY SUCH SYSTEMS;

8 6. THE NUMBER OF FINES AND TOTAL AMOUNT OF FINES PAID AFTER FIRST
9 NOTICE OF LIABILITY ISSUED FOR VIOLATIONS RECORDED BY SUCH SYSTEMS;

10 7. THE NUMBER OF VIOLATIONS ADJUDICATED AND RESULTS OF SUCH ADJUDI-
11 CATIONS INCLUDING BREAKDOWNS OF DISPOSITIONS MADE FOR VIOLATIONS
12 RECORDED BY SUCH SYSTEMS;

13 8. THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF REVENUE REALIZED BY SUCH LOCAL AUTHORITY FROM
14 SUCH ADJUDICATIONS;

15 9. EXPENSES INCURRED BY SUCH LOCAL AUTHORITY IN CONNECTION WITH THE
16 PROGRAM; AND

17 10. QUALITY OF THE ADJUDICATION PROCESS AND ITS RESULTS.

18 (N) IT SHALL BE A DEFENSE TO ANY PROSECUTION FOR A VIOLATION OF
19 SECTION ELEVEN HUNDRED SEVENTY OF THIS ARTICLE PURSUANT TO A LOCAL LAW
20 OR ORDINANCE ADOPTED PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION THAT THE RAILROAD SIGNAL
21 INDICATIONS WERE MALFUNCTIONING AT THE TIME OF THE ALLEGED VIOLATION.

22 S 3. Subdivision 2 of section 87 of the public officers law is amended
23 by adding a new paragraph (p) to read as follows:

24 (P) ARE PHOTOGRAPHS, MICROPHOTOGRAPHS, VIDEOTAPE OR OTHER RECORDED
25 IMAGES PREPARED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF SECTION ELEVEN HUNDRED SEVENTY-A
26 OF THE VEHICLE AND TRAFFIC LAW.

27 S 4. This act shall take effect on the thirtieth day after it shall
28 have become a law.