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# CORY TOMCZYK

STATE SENATOR • 29<sup>TH</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

## SB 614

Senate Committee on Transportation and Local Government  
Wednesday, January 17, 2024

In Wisconsin, there are two seasons – winter and road construction. Because of our climate, road construction work zones are everywhere during the warmer months. This means that our friends and neighbors who work on maintaining our roads are put in harm's way every day.

According to the Wisconsin DOT, from 2018 through 2023, there were 11,678 crashes in Wisconsin work zones. Those resulted in 4,370 injuries and 63 deaths. In 2022, there was one work zone crash every four hours.<sup>i</sup>

We need to give law enforcement the tools they need to properly investigate a work zone accident and access the most accurate information. The men and women who make their living in road construction and spend their days in work zones deserve to work in the safest environment possible so they can go home each night to their families.

SB 614 would allow a political subdivision to install and maintain a camera(s) in highway work zones for the SOLE purpose of capturing video or photographic evidence involving traffic accidents. The policy goal is to ensure that the “human elements of truth and untruthfulness” would not be necessary when observing an egregious incident in a work zone. In SB 614, camera footage could be accessed and used only if a police report related to a particular incident in a work zone is filed. It does not need to be a traffic accident in order for law enforcement to access the footage, however. If something like a kidnapping or shooting were to happen to take place in a work zone, we want law enforcement to be able to access that footage to be used in court.

This bill is simply another potential tool in the toolbox in our efforts to ensure that Wisconsin's work zones remain safe and to ensure that law enforcement has necessary and accurate information when addressing a work zone related accident.

DOT has reached out with a series of clarifying questions. My office has taken those questions and discussed the possibility of an amendment to address their concerns and will be working on that prior to an exec.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://wisconsindot.gov/Documents/safety/education/workzone/WZSafetyFactSheet.pdf>



# TODD NOVAK

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 51<sup>ST</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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Toll-Free: (888) 534-0051  
Rep.Novak@legis.wi.gov

P.O. Box 8953  
Madison, WI 53708-8953

DATE: Wednesday, January 17th, 2024  
RE: Testimony on Senate Bill 614  
TO: Senate Committee on Transportation and Local Government  
FROM: State Representative Todd Novak

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Thank you Chairman Tomczyk and members of the Senate Committee on Transportation and Local Government for holding this public hearing on Senate Bill 614 relating to authorizing cameras in highway work zones.

Chairman Tomczyk, I want to thank you for your willingness to work with me in authoring this important bill.

We authored SB 614 after being approached by local stakeholders and law enforcement officials who expressed serious concerns with a growing trend of crashes in work zones on Wisconsin roadways.

SB 614 will allow local governments the authority to install and maintain a camera system in highway work zones for capturing video and/or photographic evidence involving traffic accidents.

This is the only purpose for these cameras. Our intent with this bill is to ensure that there is clear and reliable evidence available to law enforcement when investigating incidents relating to traffic accidents that occur in these work zones. Our bill is another tool to ensure safety on Wisconsin roadways particularly in highway work zones.

The public has the right to know that we are giving our law enforcement the tools to properly investigate a work zone accident and access the most accurate information. The men and women who make their livings in road construction and spend their days in work zones also deserve to work in the safest environment possible so they can go home each night to their families.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 614





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**Testimony of Wisconsin Department of Transportation**  
**Assistant Deputy Secretary Joel Nilsestuen**  
**Before the Senate Committee on Transportation and Local Government**  
*December 5, 2023*

**Re: Senate Bill 614, relating to authorizing cameras in highway work zones.**

Thank you, Chairman Tomczyk, and members of the committee for your consideration of the department's input on considering the department's input on Senate Bill 614, relating to authorizing cameras in highway work zones.

This bill authorizes a county, city, town, or village to install and maintain cameras in highway work zones to capture video or photographic evidence of traffic incidents and other violations of the law. The intent seems to offer a tool for work zone safety, which is an objective the department can appreciate.

As written, the bill is unclear in several areas. The department is engaged in discussions with the bill author to address these concerns, and we are confident that an amendment will provide better clarity and functionality to achieve the bill's objective. An amendment would address items that are key to the application of cameras in work zones without unintended consequences or confusion, such as:

- Clarifying jurisdiction.
- Definitions for a highway work zone, and whether workers need be present.
- Reviewing multiple terms that need definition to ensure proper camera placement and use.
- Clarifying reference to "police report".

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

WCHA Chairperson:  
Marv Thompson, Barron County

WCHA Vice-Chair:  
Matthew Budde, Calumet County

WCHA Past Chairman:  
Tim Kessler, Washburn County

WCHA Treasurer:  
Jim Griesbach, Marathon County

WCHA President:  
Roland Hawk, P.E., Wood County

WCHA Secretary:  
Robbie Krejci, P.E., St. Croix County

WCHA Past President:  
Jon Johnson, Eau Claire County

WCHA Executive Director:  
Patrick B. Vander Sanden



January 17, 2024

TO: Members, Senate Committee on Transportation and Local Government  
FR: Patrick Vander Sanden, Executive Director

RE: 2023 Senate Bill 614

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Senators,

The Wisconsin County Highway Association (WCHA) fully supports efforts to maximize safety of any personnel working in work zones along our roadways. We very much appreciate and thank Senator Cory Tomczyk's leadership in both introducing this legislation and bringing it forward as the Chair of the committee.

A little over month ago, several Wisconsin County Highway Commissioners, who make up the core of WCHA, came to the State Capitol to testify in support of SB 591, which would require 30 minutes of work zone safety instruction as part of the driver's ed curriculum in Wisconsin. Our Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) Lobbyist, Daniel Bahr and again our Commissioners will likely be at the public hearing to support SB 614 in the same way. Both bills are commonsense measures to protect our road workers and the reasons for each bill are the same.

One would hope that awareness, education and greater understanding of the work zone environment would be enough to prevent the many incidents that have occurred over the years, but the statistics have shown that to not be enough. The deterrent provided in SB 614 would presumably send the needed message to motorists that focus and attention to your surroundings is paramount while driving through work zones.

A greater effort on the education side through SB 591, coupled with the use of the tools provided in SB 614, (cameras for use in the investigation of work zone safety accidents) can be very effective to ensure that needed work zone safety.

Your consideration and support of Senate Bill 614 is very much appreciated.

Thank you.

(608) 367-4126

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Senate Committee on Transportation and Local Government

**FROM:** Dan Bahr, Wisconsin Counties Association

**DATE:** January 17, 2024

**SUBJECT:** SB 614 Cameras in Work Zones

WCA strongly supports SB 614 related to authorizing the presence of cameras in highway work zones. This bill authorizes a county, city, town, or village to install and maintain cameras in highway work zones for the purpose of capturing video or photographic evidence of traffic accidents and other violations of the law. Evidence captured by a camera authorized under the bill may be accessed only by a law enforcement agency and only if a police report is filed in connection with a traffic accident or other violation. Evidence captured by a camera authorized under the bill may not otherwise be used to determine compliance with any state law or local ordinance.

SB 614 would eliminate the use of “second-hand information” and allow for law enforcement to directly observe incidents that later become part of an investigation due to their egregious nature. SB 614 is NOT an automated speed enforcement mechanism. Rather, the bill simply seeks to give law enforcement the proper tools to observe an incident that occurred on the work zone area and rely on obvious and accurate information.

WCA strongly supports SB 614. For more information contact Dan Bahr at WCA.