

Councilman
TONY CARDENAS
6th Council District



NEWS 05/10/07
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Stacy Bellew
PHONE: (213) 473-7006
CELL: (818) 322-7183

CARDENAS WARNS PHOTOBLOCKER BUYERS: **“YOU CAN’T DRIVE AROUND THE LAW”**

Van Nuys - During the city’s newest red light camera system unveiling today, Councilman Tony Cardenas (District 6) introduced an initiative to study the effectiveness of controversial products such as Photoblocker. Photoblocker is a reflecting spray recently discovered by many drivers and red light runners who want to disguise their plates when caught on tape. Invisible to the naked eye, it can be sprayed directly onto license plates to allegedly distort plate numbers when captured by photo-enforced intersection cameras.

Cardenas’ motion directs the police department to conduct studies on how the new upgraded camera systems can make the reflection element of sprays or films useless by using high-quality video and capturing many angles simultaneously, unlike the old cameras.

“You can’t drive around the law,” said Councilman Tony Cardenas. “If drivers think they are getting away with being careless, then we have an obligation as a city to protect pedestrians and other drivers from this kind of disregard. By conducting tests, we can prove the ineffectiveness of these products when captured by our upgraded cameras and make drivers think twice before running the red.”

“With our new system, because we take 30 pictures per second and about four to five seconds of video, we’ll get the right angle of that plate, front and back, to determine who is driving the car or who the car belongs to. That’s with or without the spray,” said Officer Kurt Garcia, Emergency Operations Division, Los Angeles Police Department.

Other products, including tinted license plate covers, claim to do the same. Cardenas’ city motion will help determine the detrimental effect these products can have on public safety and on the loss of potential revenue for the city. City leaders say the new photo-enforced systems are less about catching those who use the spray and more about deterring reckless drivers and ensuring public safety.

“We all make mistakes, but we hope the camera will force everyone to be more cautious,” said Cardenas.

In 2006, there were 50,623 traffic collisions that occurred in the City of Los Angeles. Of that total, 3,290 were red light traffic collisions. In addition, 99 persons were seriously injured and 30 persons lost their life because someone failed to stop for a red light. Since December 2000, the City has utilized automated photo enforcement to help reduce the number of red light related traffic collisions. In April 2006, the first intersection went on-line using the City’s new photo red light contractor. Since that time, there have been 5,822 photo red light violations that have been recorded with 3,150 citations being issued.

###