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Editorial: Encinitas should scrap red-light cameras — and so should Solana Beach and Del Mar

## **If there's no proof they improve safety, the only reason for cities to have them is greed**

By [The San Diego Union-Tribune Editorial Board](#)

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In 1994, after New York City became the [first U.S. city](#) to use red-light cameras that generate automatic traffic tickets around the clock, the idea that the devices could both promote traffic safety and provide a new revenue source proved irresistible in cities coast to coast. In 2012, the number of U.S. jurisdictions using red-light cameras [peaked at 540](#).

Ever since, however, the cameras have fallen out of favor. Studies are [widely mixed](#) on whether they actually improve safety, and public cynicism over whether their primary purpose is to [boost revenue](#) has kept building. In California, the fine for a red-light violation is a staggering [\\$490](#). In 2014, when New Jersey scrapped its red-light pilot program, Moody's credit-rating agency [warned](#) the loss would wreak havoc with the finances of numerous cities.

Thankfully, San Diego [eliminated](#) red-light cameras in 2013, and most other cities in the county that installed them have also stopped using them, partly because of complaints the fines were so regressive.

Which brings us to Encinitas, where the City Council is considering whether to extend the contract of the company which operates red-light cameras at two busy intersections on El Camino Real. Mayor Catherine Blakespear and Councilman Joe Mosca think the time has come to pull the plug, raising accurate and substantiated concerns about the cameras' effectiveness and fairness.

Here's hoping Blakespear and Mosca prevail — and that their common sense spreads to Solana Beach and Del Mar, the only other remaining cities with red-light cameras in the county. Policing for profit is not a good reason to keep them, given a lack of strong evidence that the cameras are effective.

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