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### New Rule Leaves Drivers Surprised

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Longtime Bolts player to miss first four regular season games; says he wasn't aware he used banned substances

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#### WATCHDOG (/NEWS/WATCHDOG/)

# San Diego drops red-light cameras

(/staff/matt-clark/) By Matt Clark (/staff/matt-clark/) 15:17 p.m. Feb. 1, 2013



Mayor Bob Filner hauls off a red-light camera warning sign, no longer needed after his announcement that the city was doing away with the cameras citywide. — K. C. Alfred



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22-year Congressman predicts the next huge disaster for America—worse than 2008, Black Monday and Great Depression.

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San Diego on Friday became the latest in a cadre of California cities turning their backs on red-light cameras — aloof intersection sentries that have prompted \$490 tickets to be mailed to 20,000 motorists per year here.

(http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/2013/feb/01/san-diego-red-light-cameras-filner-halts/)

Most prolific intersection for the tickets, North Harbor Drive and West Grape Street, near San Diego

(http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/2013/feb/01/san-diego-red-light-cameras-filner-halts/)

A crew went to work immediately taking down "photo enforced" signs throughout the city.

(http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/2013/feb/01/san-diego-red-light-cameras-filner-halts/)

"Seems to me that such a program can only be justified if there are demonstrable facts that prove that they raise the safety awareness and decrease accidents in our city," Filner said of the cameras. "The data, in fact, does not really prove it."

Bicycle and pedestrian groups immediately raised safety concerns about the end of the program. Still, Filner called it the San Diego version of a traffic trap, and said he would rather have the four officers who were reviewing the camera's photos back on the streets interacting directly with motorists.

"It just seemed to me that the hostility toward them (the cameras) bred more disrespect for the law than respect for the law," Filner said, adding that many members of the public felt the program was only about making the city money.

The mayor's action followed through on a campaign promise made last fall in response to a question from The Watchdog, which surveyed candidates about the program.

Friday was the first day the city's red light camera program has halted since 2001, when it was shut down for a year to evaluate its effectiveness amid public outcries and lawsuits.

Nearly 200,000 tickets carrying fines in the tens of millions of dollars have been issued since the cameras were turned on in August 1998.

San Diego drops red light cameras filner halts text=San Diego drops red light cameras filner halts&title=San Diego drops red light cameras filner halts

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After the county and the state took their share of fine revenue, the city received about \$1.9 million for the tickets in fiscal year 2011. The city kept about \$200,000 after paying the officers who issued the tickets, a camera vendor and other costs.

Filner said Harbor and Grape in particular was an example of why the camera program needed to go, because because many of its tickets went to tourists — something The Watchdog reported in June 2012.

"Here's the welcome that we give to San Diego," Filner said. "Here's a \$500 fine. I don't think that's the way to tell visitors, 'thank you for coming to San Diego.'"

The program's stated purpose was to reduce accidents, but a 2002 audit of the camera program found the Harbor and Grape intersection had so few accidents that the city should move its cameras elsewhere. The city did not follow through on that recommendation, and The Watchdog found a decade later there have been no accidents since 2001 at the intersection, according to the state's accident database and the San Diego Police Department.

The city's transportation department said the cameras at Harbor and Grape were there to encourage drivers to stop obstructing the notoriously-gridlocked intersection. Several readers have told The Watchdog they are concerned gridlock will get worse when the cameras come down.

Two community groups supporting pedestrians and bicyclists also expressed concern with Filner's decision.

Kevin C. Wood, chair of the San Diego County Bicycle Coalition, said 97 percent of drivers ticketed under the program never received a second violation.

"Many improvements in infrastructure and enforcement are necessary to make San Diego safer for cycling and eliminating this program would only make it worse," Wood said in a prepared statement. "We must do everything possible to change driver behavior so all people can feel comfortable riding our streets."

Kathleen Ferrier, policy manager with Walk San Diego, said she was dismayed Filner did not reference studies that have shown San Diego's program has reduced red light running and accidents.

"We're really concerned that this program has been eliminated. These cameras have actually been shown to improve safety," Ferrier said. "There was a lot of emphasis today in the mayor's speech about safety, but there was no mention of the fact that these cameras have been proven to improve safety for all traffic users."

San Diego joins a long list of Southern California cities that have ended their red light programs. Most recently, voters in Murrieta ended their program by ballot, banning the cameras from their city. Other cities that have turned off their cameras include Los Angeles, San Juan Capistrano, Pasadena, Grand Terrace, Bell Gardens, Corona and Glendale.

San Diego Police Chief William Lansdowne, who spoke after Filner made his announcement, said he and the mayor looked to those cities for guidance on what to do with San Diego's program.

"The most effective way to create safety in traffic is focusing on the enforcement aspect and the education aspect and these officers provide that," Lansdowne said, motioning to several department motorcycle officers also in attendance at the announcement.

City Councilman Kevin Faulconer said he supports the mayor's decision.

"Red light cameras haven't produced the public safety improvements the city expected," Faulconer said in a statement. "I agree with the Mayor that now is the time to take the cameras down."

Filner said the tickets that were issued before the program was shut down will be processed normally through the court system. He also said the loss of revenue for the city will not lead to any city employees losing their jobs.

Several other San Diego County cities continue to operate red light cameras, including Del Mar, El Cajon, Encinitas, Escondido, Oceanside, Solana Beach and Vista.

An unscientific U-T San Diego online poll on the subject (now closed) garnered 2,276 votes, 82 percent in favor of ending San Diego's program.

**What should San Diego do when the red-light camera contract expires in January? (/polls/2012/oct/what-should-san-diego-do-when-red-light-camera-con//results/)**

- 4% Renew it with the current 15 intersections (96)
- 13% Renew it with more cameras (290)
- 1% Renew it with fewer cameras (29)
- 82% End the program (1861)


2276 TOTAL VOTES.

forest/)

Kawhi Leonard is SDSU's best recruiter (/news/2015/jul/01/kawhi-leonard-sdsu-recruiter/)

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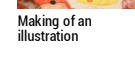
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Tomato, avocado, and sweet corn towers with cilantro pesto



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San Diego Police motorcycle officers

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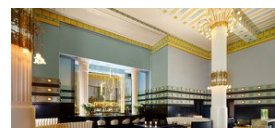
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Red light cameras unplugged

View Gallery (/photos/galleries/2013/feb/04/red-light-cameras-unplugged/xml/)

### Red-light cameras

- Red-light runners caught red-handed (<http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2009/jun/13/1cz13photo213156-red-light-runners-caught-red-hand/>)
- Many red-light tickets spew from one spot (<http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2012/jun/22/quarter-red-light-tickets-spawn-one-spot/>)
- Photo red-light tickets can be challenged (<http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2012/jun/30/photo-red-light-tickets-can-be-challenged/>)
- Another city drops red-light cameras, but not SD (<http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2012/oct/05/another-city-drops-red-light-cameras-not-san-diego/>)
- Red-light cameras may screech to a stop (<http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2012/oct/16/red-light-cameras-may-screech-stop/>)
- Victim of T-bone accident says keep red-light cameras (<http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2012/oct/19/victim-t-bone-accident-says-keep-red-light-cameras/>)
- Hall: Put the brakes on SD's red-light cameras (<http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2012/oct/31/put-the-brakes-on-san-diegos-red-light-cameras/>)
- Sanders won't push to keep red-light cameras (<http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2012/nov/01/sanders-wont-push-renew-red-light-cameras/>)
- Murrieta: Red-light cameras will come down (<http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2012/nov/06/murrieta-voters-red-light-cameras/>)



(/staff /matt-clark/)

**Matt Clark**

<http://twitter.com/MattTheJourno>

<http://facebook.com/UTwatchdog>

### More from Matt Clark

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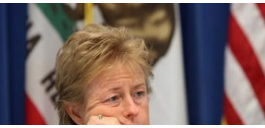
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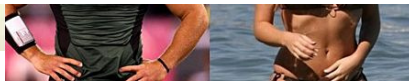
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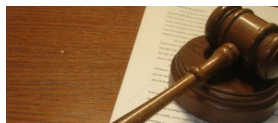
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**County fountains used 800K gallons**  
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**Added police storage costs \$80K yearly**  
(http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/2015/jun/25/excess-property-room-lease/)



**CHP officer charged in DMV scandal**  
(http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/2015/jun/25/chp-officer-ravelo-charged-dmv-scandal/)

**From Around the Web**

- California Is Sitting On The Solution To Its Drought Problem (http://www.fastcoexist.com/3044988/california-is-sitting-on-the-solution-to-its-drought-problem?utm\_source=ps%20outbrain&utm\_medium=paidcm&utm\_campaign=ps101coexist&utm\_content=coexist&cid=ps101coexist) Co.Exist
- What's The Most Common Last Name In The United States? (http://www.ancestry.com/s63188131766/rd.ashx) Ancestry
- These Beautiful Floating Villages Are Made From Old Oil Tankers (http://www.fastcoexist.com/3046359/these-beautiful-floating-villages-are-made-from-old-oil-tankers?utm\_source=ps%20outbrain&utm\_medium=paidcm&utm\_campaign=ps101coexist&utm\_content=coexist&cid=ps101coexist) Co.Exist
- Do You Make These Decorating Mistakes? How NOT To Decorate (Photos) (http://www.hgtv.com/design/decorating/design-101/25-biggest-decorating-mistakes-and-solutions-pictures?c1=OB\_DGTL\_HGTV\_HPVC&c2=Outbrain&c3=HGTV\_HPVC&c4=25-Biggest-Decorating-Mistakes-and-Solut&c5=5440504) HGTV
- 10 Potential MLB Trades That Could Work For All Involved Teams (http://www.rantsports.com/mlb/2015/04/28/10-potential-mlb-trades-that-make-way-too-much-sense-2/?utm\_medium=referral&utm\_source=Outbrain&utm\_term=Title3) RantSports
- Rapper Known As Chinx Is Fatally Shot While Stopped At Light In Queens (http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/18/nyregion/rapper-lionel-pickens-better-known-as-chinx-killed-in-queens-shooting.html?WT.mc\_id=2015-JULY-OUTBRAIN-ARTS\_AUD\_DEV-0701-0731&WT.mc\_ev=click&ad-keywords=AUDDEVREMARK) The New York Times

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- Do You Think The White House Went Too Far With The Rainbow Lights? (http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/polls/2015/jun/do-you-think-white-house-went-too-far-rainbow-ligh/results/)
- NBC To Donald Trump: You're Fired! (http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/2015/jun/29/nbc-severing-business-relationship-with-donald/)



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Comment



**Christopher Paul Steiner** · San Diego, California

I am very careful around intersections, but I make an occasional goof up -- like not fully stop when turning right. Unlike a police officer, these cameras can't discriminate every particular traffic situation. If the fine is going to be so high (\$500), then we have to give some leeway for human error and traffic situations. These camera's don't -- you get a ticket with high probability if you make a one-off traffic error.

Reply · Like · June 10, 2013 at 5:08pm



**Henri Chazaud** · San Diego, California

It's amazing how many people don't stop at stop signs or red lights, whether going straight or turning right. When I pick up my daughter from school, I often park near a 4 way stop to wait for her. Out of boredom I often count the number of cars that don't come to a complete stop and it's often more than 3/4s.

Reply · Like · 1 · June 1, 2013 at 12:20pm



**Heather Davis**

I'm for cameras everywhere, if you're living honestly and not scamming others then you don't need to worry if there's a camera on you. Only crooks and liars don't want to be caught in the act. And Police officers don't do anything to motorists downtown. I live on Pacific Highway and I was driving behind a car with no license plates, acting sketchy with a cop next to me for 6 blocks. He never did anything and he was well aware of the car in front of both of us. People already stop in these intersections on purpose and block traffic, now there's no cameras they're never going to figure out you can't do that and you're responsible to not come up to a downtown intersection on the bumper of the person in front of you.

Reply · Like · February 27, 2013 at 9:56pm



**Hasan Kasik**

Seems like Matt Copeland is a red light camera lobbyist... has to rebut every comment against the cameras.

Reply · Like · February 19, 2013 at 9:27am



**Hasan Kasik**

Sorry Matt, I think you lost this fight.

Reply · Like · February 19, 2013 at 9:27am



**Lizeth Navarrete** · Beaverton, Oregon

Are all the cameras turned off ?

Reply · Like · February 9, 2013 at 9:30am



**Lee Keener** · Top Commenter

What I was always leary of was the timing of those lights, way off base. It is hard to stop that fast even going the speed limit or less when the light changes and before you know it you have to make a real quick decision, go or stop. If you go you will chance getting a ticket, if you stop you are most likely going to get rear ended, so you are put between a rock and a hard place Had them in Houston, hate them, so I say good for San Diego! Take those suckers down!

Reply · Like · 2 · February 6, 2013 at 6:13pm



**Matt Copeland** · San Diego Miramar College

Actually, at a yellow light you are supposed to SLOW. So if you actually followed the rules and SLOWED down at a YELLOW light you wouldn't have to worry about running the red light. So saying you were driving too fast to stop safely is just admitting you were driving at an unsafe speed for the conditions and could not stay in control of your vehicle.

Now of course I am playing devil's advocate as I am completely against the cameras. But this is what the judge would tell you.

Reply · Like · 1 · February 15, 2013 at 10:21pm



**Dave Price** · Top Commenter · Northern Illinois University

Hurray!

Reply · Like · February 4, 2013 at 10:48am



**Janet Binder Houts** · Attorney at Houts & Houts Attorneys At Law

Worst fact was that we split the first half of the revenue with the Arizona outfit that does the cameras. Second worst fact was that one by Star of India. Did slow me at Nimitz and Rosecrans though. Not so much the 15 cameras that caught me on Melrose on a beautiful day 8 miles per hour UNDER the speed limit going through the north bound intersection just before Vista Way West Bound. Lastly 500 bucks is just too freaking much for the violation. Make it a non mover if it's a camera and 100 bucks and don't split with AZ and get rid of Start of India and you might be OK. Posted by my husband who is too lazy to enroll in comment program.

Reply · Like · 1 · February 4, 2013 at 9:53am



**Laurence Kahn** · Owner / Chiropractic Physician at Laurence Kahn, D.C. Motion Doctor Chiropractic

The most destructive thing about red-light cameras isn't just how galling it is to be ticketed by a robot; it's destructive of our entire criminal justice system. In the olden days, we had a right to confront our accusers and cross-examine them. This was an essential part of due process. Do you think you'll ever have the chance to cross-examine any of the people in charge of the cameras? Don't make me laugh! If any citizen ever remembers that we have that right, his ticket will be dismissed before any more of the sheep start to catch on.

For many years now, it has been cities' strategy to increase administrative hurdles to citizens accused of malum prohibitum offenses (like parking tickets). This scheme makes it much cheaper to just pay the damn ticket than to take two or more mornings off work to fight it. Collections go up, costs of enforcement go down.

Is there anyone, anywhere in America, who believes that red-light cameras are about safety? Of course not. They're about increasing collections and reducing costs of enforcement. And about making people live in fear of even the littlest laws.

Reply · Like · 3 · February 4, 2013 at 6:44am



**Matt Copeland** · San Diego Miramar College

Actually, the right to cross examine and confront your accuser is a part of the 6th amendment which is only for criminal charges. A red light violation is for civil charges, so no, you are not protected under the 6th amendment for these cameras!

Reply · Like · 1 · February 15, 2013 at 10:24pm



**Jim Swingle** · Top Commenter · Escondido, California

Put in speeding cameras on the freeway. Have the computers issue tickets for people going miles over the limit. The State would rake in the dough until people, as a rule, started taking them seriously. In the mean time, they would be there as a reminder.

Reply · Like · 1 · February 3, 2013 at 4:24pm



**Is end of small water districts coming?**

(<http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/2015/jun/21/the-end-of-small-water-districts/>)



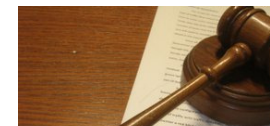
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