Testimony on 11/9/26 Joint Consumer Affairs and Protection, Governmental Operations, and Local Governments Committee Hearing

Open Plans writes today in regard to the joint hearing on automatic license plate reader (ALPR) systems. We are a New York City-based non-profit advocacy organization fighting for a more livable city. A core part of our work is ensuring our streets are safe and enforced, and **we write today to note the important difference between ALPR systems like Flock and automated parking and traffic enforcement systems like red light, speed, bus lane, and parking enforcement cameras**.

Automated traffic enforcement systems are essential parts of our enforcement infrastructure. In New York City, the average number of daily violations at red light camera locations declined by 73% since the program began in 1994, and violations dropped an average of 30% at speed camera locations after 24/7 enforcement began in 2022.[1] The Automated Camera Enforcement program (ACE, formerly known as the ABLE program) has likewise been a success. Routes with automated enforcement saw bus speeds increase 5%, collisions reduce by 20%, and up to a 10% reduction in emissions.[2]

Within these automated enforcement programs, and in proposed programs like S8665/A5440 and S1891/A4523, there are robust privacy protections for New Yorkers. These programs do not keep a database of vehicles shared with NYPD like ALPR systems like Flock do. After fines are adjudicated, captured violations are deleted and are not stored. Most importantly, in order for the footage to be used for anything other than the captured traffic violation, there must be a court order granted under specific circumstances outlined in the laws. **The footage is not shared with law enforcement for any other purpose.**

Open Plans does not support ALPR systems like Flock. It is vital that these types of ALPR systems are not lumped together with automated traffic enforcement cameras. They are discreet and serve different purposes. Open Plans is fully supportive of red light, speed, bus lane, and parking enforcement cameras with significant privacy features in place.

We look forward to continuing to collaborate on automated traffic enforcement cameras, and making the difference between them and ALPR systems like Flock clear.

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[1] "New York City Red Light Camera Program Review: 2024 Report," NYC DOT; "Speeding, Injuries, and Traffic Fatalities Declined in Areas With Speed Cameras During First Year of 24/7 Enforcement," NYC DOT

[2] "MTA Announces Bus Lane Camera Enforcement Expanded to Include New Violations," MTA

Respectfully,
Open Plans

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