



People for Proper Policing in North Wales

Speed camera blamed for doubling of motorway casualties

By Daily Mail Reporter on 15th November 2009

A motorway speed camera responsible for **earning the Government £500,000-a-year** in fines has been blamed for increasing accidents since it was installed.

The camera, which monitors a busy stretch of **the M11 in Essex**, results in 9,000 tickets a year, but figures released by police show crashes have risen by a quarter at the site.

A Freedom of Information request made by campaigners who oppose what they see as revenue-based penalty tickets also showed casualties have almost doubled since 2001 when the camera was set up.

Paul Pearson, who runs motoring website www.penaltychargenotice.co.uk, said: *'No wonder they haven't removed the camera that is causing these accidents. It is just raising too much money and they clearly want to keep it there.'*

Essex Police, which runs the camera together with **Essex Council and the Highways Agency**, had initially **refused a Freedom of Information request** by Mr Pearson for details about the speeding tickets issued by the machine. But after **a ruling by the Information Commissioner**, the police have been forced to disclose that in 2003 alone the M11 camera was responsible for 9,639 fines and a further 8,451 in 2004. The following year 9,047 motorists were caught by the camera and in 2006 a total of 7,801 were sent fines. In 2007, the number fell to 3,305. There are no complete figures for 2008, but in the year up to May 2009, the number of fines had risen to 6,445.

Mr Pearson has highlighted the danger he claims the camera poses, after he put in an earlier Freedom of Information request, **having witnessed an accident on the road.**

He said: *'The speed limit reduces from 70mph to 50mph without prior warning, the carriageway narrows from 3 to 2 lanes and just beyond is a speed camera.'*

In February 2008 we witnessed the aftermath of a three-car pile up immediately in front of the camera. It was obvious that it was the camera that caused the accident because cars were having to reduce speed and merge and then of course some motorists slam on their brakes when they pass the camera.

'So we asked the Department of Transport for the accident and casualty statistics.'

The data showed that in the five years before the camera was installed, there were **13 accidents and 14 casualties in the area.** In the following five years, the number of accidents **rose to 16 and casualties to 24.** The Highways Agency said that the accident data for the spot, between junctions four and five on the southbound carriageway, did not show a pattern of accidents which would be consistent with the camera itself being a factor.

Police have blamed motorists who slow down ahead of the camera and then speed up once they are clear of it. A spokesman for Essex police denied the camera was causing crashes. He said it was not being kept for revenue reasons and that there were no plans to remove it.

He said that police recently added an extra 'speed indicator' sign that displayed approaching motorists' speeds before they reached the camera, in addition to camera warning signs and 50mph signs. **'Cameras do not cause collisions, poor driving does,'** said the spokesman.

Read more: <http://www.mailonsunday.co.uk/news/article-1227998/Speed-camera-rakes-500-000-year-blamed-doubling-motorway-casualties.html#ixzz0XUIIW6N2>

The PPP comments ... The facts are ... the camera has failed to reduce incidents at this location. They have increased significantly The Police confirm that the camera distorts and changes driver behaviour which is what we know to be true. It is a very valuable asset for the unholy alliance (camera partnership). There seems to be an engineering problem in this area. And the actual analysis of the causes of the 16 incidents should be published . The Police, as usual, are **institutionally dishonest** and resist the FOI request ,why?, because they know what it will reveal. They should therefore be questioning the road safety value of the camera themselves. With our limited information we conclude that there is a back ground frequency of incidents caused by the road layout and additional incidents now caused by the camera. If a proper survey over a few days was carried out we would expect a much larger number of near misses due to both causes to be visible.

We repeat, until the unholy alliances are held accountable for their disingenuous failings nothing will change. This whole affair is a classic version of what J.J. Leeming was campaigning against in the 1960s.