



Institute of Transportation Engineers

Florida Puerto Rico District

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The Honorable Randy Fine
Florida House of Representatives
222 The Capitol
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1300

February 10, 2020

Subject: House Bill 1371 – Traffic and Pedestrian Safety

Dear Representative Fine:

On behalf of the Florida Section of the Institute of Transportation Engineers, I would like to express our concern about the impacts of House Bill 1371, which proposes to eliminate the use of the Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) at midblock pedestrian crossings.

Section 316.130(7)(b) of the Florida Statutes requires motorists to come to a complete stop for a pedestrian in a crosswalk. Marked crosswalks at mid-block locations are accompanied by signs, both in advance of and at the crosswalk location, to further emphasize the presence of the crosswalk to the driver. Unfortunately, too many drivers ignore both the markings and the signs, endangering the pedestrians attempting to use the crosswalk.

The RRFB, developed a little over ten years ago in St. Petersburg, was intended to increase the conspicuity of the existing crosswalk markings and signs. Pedestrians activating the RRFBs alert the driver to their presence in the crosswalk. However, the RRFBs were never intended to serve as a traffic control device by itself.

The RRFB concept went through extensive testing in the field and was found to have a much higher rate of driver stopping compliance than markings and signs by themselves, even when accompanied by a traditional flashing amber beacon on the sign. Its simple design, capability for being solar powered, and minimal structural mounting requirements, kept the cost low – much lower than the alternative Hybrid Beacons or traditional traffic signals. In these days of limited resources, the lower cost allowed these proven devices to be used at many more locations while enhancing pedestrian safety.

By eliminating the availability of the RRFB as a crosswalk enhancing tool, our concern is that many crosswalks will need to be removed, thus having a negative effect on pedestrian safety. Please reconsider your support for this bill and allow the Florida Department of Transportation and the many local agencies that use RRFBs to continue to educate the public about their appropriate use.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Peter J. Yauch, P.E., PTOE, RSP2I
District Administrator