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Red-Light Violation Citations: Fee Distribution Clarification

The Chico Police Department and the City of Chico are providing a statement to clarify how fines from red-light violation citations are collected and distributed under California law. Recent questions from residents have highlighted the need for a clear explanation of where citation revenue goes and what portion, if any, is retained by the City.

In Butte County, fines for red-light violations are not paid directly to the City. Instead, all payments are made to Butte County Superior Court, which serves as the central collection agency for traffic penalties. The court then allocates the collected funds based on formulas outlined in various sections of the California Vehicle Code, Penal Code, and Government Code.

Upon receipt of payment by the court, the total fine amount is divided among several state and county designated funds, which can include county administrative and processing fees, state penalty assessments, or public safety initiatives. The exact percentages for each category are established by California statute and are uniform statewide. Cities do not have the authority to modify or negotiate these amounts. The Butte County Superior Court, by direction of the State of California, distributes \$53.51 to the city under PC 1463.002 and \$94.08 under PC 1463.11 for every \$465 citation, or a total of \$147.59 per citation. **The fee distribution schedule for either citations issued by Officers or citations issued by the Red-Light Camera (RLC) remains the same.**

The portion allocated to the City of Chico represents a nominal fraction of the total fine (just over 30%). This municipal share is intended to help offset a variety of costs related to operating traffic safety programs. Notably, because the majority of the revenue collected from the citation is distributed to state and county programs, it is not a significant revenue source for the City. The goal of enforcement is public safety and the reduction of collisions, not revenue generation.

The Chico Police Department and City of Chico remain committed to transparency in how traffic enforcement programs are administered and funded. RLCs and enforcement efforts are used to reduce dangerous driving behaviors, decrease collisions, and improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists.

Residents who would like more information about citation processing or the state-mandated distribution formulas may contact the Butte County Superior Court, or visit the Uniform Bail and Penalty Schedule, posted on their [website](#).

The Chico Police Department is committed to ensuring our community is a safe place to live, work, and recreate within!