
REPORT OF THE CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

DATE: March 7, 2025

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections, and Intergovernmental Relations Committee

FROM: Sharon M. Tso 
Chief Legislative Analyst

Council File No.: 25-0002-S10

Assignment No.: 25-03-0185

SUBJECT: SB 701 (Wahab)

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt Resolution (Lee - Park) to include in the City's 2025-2026 State Legislative Program SUPPORT for SB 701 (Wahab) which would add a new section to the California Penal Code to prohibit the possession, use or attempted use, manufacture, purchase, sale, distribution or importation of any Wi-Fi Jamming and/or Communication Signal Scrambler device.

SUMMARY

On February 26, 2025, a Resolution (Lee - Park) was introduced in support of SB 701, which would add a new section to the California Penal Code to prohibit the possession, use or attempted use, manufacture, purchase, sale, distribution or importation of any Wi-Fi Jamming and/or Communication Signal Scrambler (CSS) device. The Resolution states that, even though Wi-Fi Jammers and CSSs are illegal under federal law and regulated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), they are easily obtainable and there has been increased incidents of these devices being used by burglars to disable wireless security systems in Southern California.

The Resolution further states that there is no current penalty for the possession, use or attempted use, manufacture, purchase or distribution of these devices in California, making it difficult to prosecute individuals using these devices as part of a burglary. The Resolution, therefore, seeks an official position of the City of Los Angeles to support SB 701.

BACKGROUND

With the spread of Wi-Fi or cellular-based home security systems, there has been an increase in concerns relative to the use of Wi-Fi Jammers and CSS devices in burglaries. While these devices are already prohibited by the FCC, criminals can still obtain them. These devices work by blocking or scrambling the broadcast spectrum of a home security system and can also be used to block cellular and radio spectrum. These devices have no legal purpose and enable a burglar to enter a home or business without setting off an alarm. These devices can also make it difficult or impossible to call emergency services using a cell phone and can block police radio traffic, severely impacting the ability of law enforcement to communicate during emergencies.

SB 701 would make it an infraction to manufacture, import, market, purchase, sell, or operate a signal jammer, unless authorized to do so by the FCC, and make this infraction punishable by forfeiture of the signal jamming device and a fine of up to \$5,000. The bill would also make it a

crime to operate a signal jammer in conjunction with the commission of a crime, punishable by a fine of up to \$5,000 or by imprisonment as a misdemeanor or a felony, or both the fine and imprisonment. In addition, the bill would make it a felony to willfully or maliciously use a signal jammer to block public safety communications, punishable by imprisonment in the state prison for two, four, or six years.

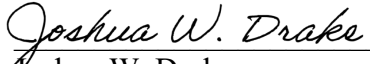
According to the Police Department (LAPD), criminal activity is becoming increasingly sophisticated, and the LAPD has noted that offenders have started to use of Wi-Fi jammers and CSS to further their criminal activity. There has been a significant increase throughout California, and specifically the Southern California area, where these devices have been used as part of residential and commercial burglaries. In the City in particular, the LAPD states that there has been a significant increase in both residential and commercial burglaries involving Wi-Fi jammers and CSS devices throughout the San Fernando Valley and West Los Angeles area. The LAPD states that Wi-Fi jammers and CSS devices are a clear threat to the safety of both residential and commercial locations due to the ability to block alarm system signals and security cameras from working effectively. Wi-Fi jammers and CSS devices also create a unique hazard to the public due to their ability to block cell phone signals and radio signals, as noted above.

As Wi-Fi jammers and CSS devices are already restricted as administrative violations under FCC regulations, they serve no legal purpose for any persons or business to be in possession and because of the danger these devices present to the public, legislation to amend the California Penal Code to prohibit the manufacturing, possession, sale, and usage or attempted usage of any Wi-Fi jammer or CSS device would benefit public safety.

BILL STATUS

02/21/2025 Introduced

02/24/2025 From printer. May be acted upon on or after March 24.



Joshua W. Drake
Analyst

Attachments: 1. Resolution

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council; and

WHEREAS, in general, Wi-Fi Jammers and Communication Signal Scramblers (CSSs) are illegal under federal law and are regulated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC); and

WHEREAS, despite federal regulation, these devices remain easily obtainable; and

WHEREAS, there have been increased incidents of these devices being used by burglars to disable wireless security systems in Southern California; and


WHEREAS, these devices can also block cell phone signals and law enforcement radio signals, making it impossible for victims to call 9-1-1 or for police to communicate with each other when one of these devices is being used; and

WHEREAS, there is no current penalty under state law for the possession, use or attempted use, manufacture, purchase or distribution of Wi-Fi Jammers in the state of California, making it difficult to prosecute individuals using these devices in burglaries; and

WHEREAS, SB 701 would make it an infraction to manufacture, import, market, purchase, sell, or operate a signal jammer unless authorized to do so by the FCC, punishable by forfeiture of the device and a fine of up to \$5,000. The bill would make it a crime to operate a signal jammer in conjunction with the commission of a crime, punishable by a fine of up to \$5,000 and/or by imprisonment. The bill would make it a felony to willfully or maliciously use a signal jammer to block public safety communications, punishable by imprisonment in the state prison for 2, 4, or 6 years.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2025 - 2026 State Legislative Program SUPPORT for SB 701 (Wahab) to add a new section to the California Penal Code to prohibit the possession, use or attempted use, manufacture, purchase, sale, distribution or importation of any Wi-Fi Jamming and/or Communication Signal Scrambler device.

PRESENTED BY


JOHN S. LEE

Councilmember, 12th District

SECONDED BY




FEB 26 2025

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