
Transportation Committee

HB 1217

Brief Description: Authorizing local authorities to establish maximum speed limits on certain nonarterial highways.

Sponsors: Representatives Ryu, Pedersen, Johnson, Klippert, Maxwell, Finn, Kenney, Santos, Springer, Ladenburg, Appleton, Liias, McCoy, Miloscia, Fitzgibbon, Kagi, Roberts and Billig.

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| <p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allows for the establishment of 20 miles per hour maximum speed limits on nonarterial highways in business or residence districts without an engineering and traffic investigation. |
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Hearing Date: 1/25/11

Staff: David Munnecke (786-7315).

Background:

State law sets the maximum speed limit at 25 miles per hour on city and town streets, 50 miles per hour on county roads, and 60 miles per hour on state highways. Local authorities may increase the maximum speed limit to 60 miles per hour or decrease the maximum speed limit to 20 miles per hour on a particular roadway on the basis of engineering and traffic investigations, but the alteration of a speed limit on a state highway must be approved by the Secretary of Transportation. Any altered speed limit goes into effect upon the erection of appropriate signs giving notice of the new maximum speed limit.

Speed limits are generally set to reflect the speed at which most motorists naturally drive, which is usually done by determining the speed that 85 percent of the vehicles on a roadway are traveling at or below. When setting speed limits, traffic engineers will also consider other relevant factors including:

- roadway characteristics such as shoulder condition, grade, alignment, and sight distance;

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- roadside development and lighting;
- parking practices such as angled parking;
- pedestrian and bicycle activity;
- collision rates and traffic volume trends; and
- potential conflicts with vehicles entering the roadway.

Summary of Bill:

Local jurisdictions may establish maximum speed limits of 20 miles per hour on nonarterial highways in business or residence districts without an engineering and traffic investigation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 23, 2011.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.