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Brunswick
LD 527

I would like to testify in support of L.D. 527, a bill that would allow towns to lower speed limits in their communities.

I have lived in our neighborhood of Brunswick for 26 years and the same speed limit signs were there before we moved here. And yet, the neighborhood has greatly changed. There are many more runners, walkers, and cyclists as well as pick up trucks and cars. The speed limit has not changed. It is alarming to hear and watch while walking, a car or truck come barreling down these secondary roads without slowing down at all. They will even, without slowing, weave a round a bicyclist or runner onto the other side of the road in front of another oncoming car. I once asked a cautious Ray Labbe truck driver who was traveling back and forth several times a week over a period of two years what he thought about our 35 mile mph speed limit and he replied " No one should be driving more than 20mph on this road".

Several residents have brought this topic up at town meetings and I have to say that there has been little encouragement to believe that DOT would address this issue of speed locally. I can't imagine that DOT would be opposed to towns having more authority in lowering speed limits when they as a department invest little staff and time in to trying to address this important issue. Speed studies are a brief snapshot in time in an attempt to show what is actually happening in a neighborhood. A speed study done on one of our neighborhood roads a couple of years ago merely showed over TWO days that most were obeying the speed limit of 35mph. It also included bicyclists. However, the point is, that limit is too high. A speed limit is exactly that, a limit. It means that people may drive slower, but not 5,10, 15 mph over that, even when many agree that the 35 mph limit is too high. The residents are aware of what is going on in their communities, they are the experts.

I would be very interested in learning about the data that shows that "speed limits too low can increase the risk of accidents", as compared to accidents that occur because drivers are going too fast? Read the data regarding increase in speed and fatalities since the onset of the pandemic. I wonder where those roads are that have "artificially low" speed limits that are ignored by drivers. Does that make it ok as a justification to not lower a speed limit? That is certainly a problem if those speed limits are thought, by the judgement of those drivers who chose to ignore those limits, only because it is deemed by the driver to be too slow. That is very poor justification for not lowering a speed limit. Those drivers should be fined, they should not be allowed to make their judgement on what they consider to be an "artificially low" speed limit.

Remember the ad that was on signs all over the country several years ago, "Speed Kills". It originated as a result of data published by the National HighwayTraffic Safety Administration.