



Planning & Code Enforcement

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PLANNING & CODE ENFORCEMENT

DATE: April 24, 2023

RE: LD 1634 - An Act to Grant Municipalities the Authority to Set Certain Lower Motor Vehicle Speed Limits Without a Department of Transportation Speed Study

Senator Chipman, Representative Williams and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation:

My name is Jennie Poulin Franceschi, P.E. I am the Director of Planning and Code Enforcement for the City of Westbrook. On behalf of the Mayor & City Staff, we would like to provide testimony regarding LD1634 *An Act to Grant Municipalities the Authority to Set Certain Lower Motor Vehicle Speed Limits Without a Department of Transportation Speed Study* with the recommendation of **OUGHT NOT TO PASS**.

This bill will not create safer roads by removing the protective review of MDOT & Maine State Police. Westbrook concurs with the testimony of MDOT. We feel communities are well served by the current system of review and to remove that review system will not create safer roads for all modes of transportation. This could also create a liability for municipalities as they would assume responsibility for roads where speed limits are changed without proper study.

This bill will further put local Police Departments in a position of conflict where speed limits being set without proper study and physical changes to the road will not reduce motorist speed. Police Departments are maxed out with the level of enforcement they have to currently conduct, but when you have arbitrary changes in speed limits, motorist will not change their habits and local residents will feel frustrated at the "lack of response" from Police Departments that cannot feasibly be expected to be sitting at every location where speed limit changes are considered problematic.

Additionally, local Police Departments do not have the expertise on staff to conduct the traffic studies needed to make speed limit changes and nor do they have the bandwidth to take on this task with their overwhelming workload.

It is a dangerous situation to just change speed limits and the result could cause more accidents. The science used by MDOT in conjunction with review of the Maine State Police, benefits all municipalities in keeping our roadways consistently reviewed & treated so the traveling motorist going through various communities have a consistent expectation of enforcement and how to travel along Maine Roads. The pedestrian & bicyclist using these roads also have the correct expectation of the road system to ensure their safety as well. As mentioned in MDOT's testimony, MDOT works with municipalities to address known safety concerns through installation of traffic control measures. This offer is available to any community that reaches out and is the way to make our roads safer, not by removing traffic studies and the review of MDOT & Maine State Police.

Our communities are currently better served with the traffic study review process and the improved outreach of MDOT to collaborate with communities on known safety issues in their communities.

We thank you for your time and consideration of our comments.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennie Poulin Franceschi, P.E.
Director of Planning
and Code Enforcement

Chief Sean Lally
Chief of Police

Michael T. Foley
Mayor

Eric S. Dudley, P.E.
Director of Engineering
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