



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Transportation

Director's Office
355 Capitol St. NE, MS 11
Salem, OR 97301

April 16, 2015

The Honorable Lee Beyer, Chair
Senate Committee on Business and Transportation
900 Court St. NE, S-419
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Sen. Beyer:

In yesterday's public hearing on Senate Bill 459, there was some uncertainty about the implications of the bill and how the bill would interact with ODOT's existing authority under ORS 810.180 to designate speeds on interstates.

We have consulted with the Oregon Department of Justice and confirmed that SB 459 would change Oregon's interstate statutory speed to 70 mph for passenger vehicles and 60 mph for trucks/buses. These become the default speeds on all interstates except for those areas that the Oregon Transportation Commission has designated speeds by rule based on findings in engineering and traffic investigation as required by ORS 810.180(3)(c).

Under current law and its authority, the Oregon Transportation Commission has adopted a handful of these lower speed segments primarily when an interstate runs through a metropolitan area or when geographic conditions warrant the lower speed. These segments can be found in OAR 734-020-0011(2). Under SB 459, these segments already adopted in rule would remain in place. The Oregon Transportation Commission would update its rule to clarify the new default statutory speeds of 70 mph/60 mph.

Should the Oregon Transportation Commission want to consider any additional segments lower than the new statutory speeds (70 mph/60 mph) the agency would need to again conduct an engineering and traffic investigation for just those segments. We would not be conducting an engineering and traffic investigation of the entire interstate system.

We hope this helps to clarify that SB 459 does, in fact, change the statutory speeds to 70 mph/60 mph, and that should the bill become law, ODOT is prepared to implement the changes.

Troy Costales, Administrator
Transportation Safety Division

Paul Mather, Administrator
Highway Division