

SB 558 -3, -4, -5 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Joint Committee On Transportation

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Meeting Dates: 3/6, 5/15, 5/20

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Allows a city to designate speed for a highway under the city's jurisdiction that is five miles per hour lower than the statutory speed, located in a residence district, is not an arterial highway, and the city provides signage notifying the change in designated speed.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Survivability of accidents is reduced as speed increases
- Comparison to House Bill 2702 (2019)
- Appropriate speeds on residential streets
- Whether 85th percentile method is appropriate way of setting speed limits
- Methods used in other countries for reducing traffic fatality rates
- Reasons for recent increase in traffic fatalities
- Whether cities would be liable for accidents after speed limits are changed

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-3 Modifies where the city must post a sign notifying of the designated speed on a highway.

-4 Extends statutory speed limits inside cities for alleys, narrow residential roadways, business districts, public parks, non-arterial residential highways, and interstate highways to areas outside of cities. Specifies that 25 miles per hour is the presumed speed limit on collector highways where no designated speed is posted.

-5 Clarifies definition of "residence district".

BACKGROUND:

Current law allows the City of Portland to designate the speed for a highway under the City's jurisdiction that is five miles per hour lower than the statutory speeds and the highway is located in a residential district. All other cities and counties are required to have road authorities make a formal request to the Department of Transportation to change speeds on highways. Formal requests are required to provide findings to justify the change in designated speed.

Cities with a state highway within city limits must have the road authority make a request to the Department's Highway Division for a speed zone change. The request is then forwarded to either the District Manager, Regional Manager or State Traffic-Roadway Engineer to conduct a speed-zone investigation and make a recommendation to grant or deny the request. The recommendation is sent to the Traffic-Roadway Section to be approved. The local road authority is notified of the decision. A speed zone order is issued if the local road authority concurs. If they do not concur, the case is sent to the Speed Zone Review Panel to issue a final decision.

Senate Bill 558 allows all cities the authority to establish, by ordinance, a designated speed for a highway under the jurisdiction of the city. The measure specifies that the designated speed must be five miles per hour lower than the statutory speed, that the highway be located in a residence district and not an arterial highway, and that the city provide appropriate signage of the designated speed.