

HOUSE BILL NO. 459

INTRODUCED BY W. CURDY

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING HOW A LOCAL AUTHORITY AND A COUNTY COMMISSION MAY SET A SPEED LIMIT; AND AMENDING SECTION 61-8-310, MCA."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Section 61-8-310, MCA, is amended to read:

"61-8-310. When local authorities may and shall alter limits or establish or alter area of school zone. (1) If a local authority in its jurisdiction determines on the basis of an engineering and traffic investigation that the speed permitted under 61-8-303 and 61-8-309 through 61-8-313 is greater or less than is reasonable and safe under the conditions found to exist upon a highway or part of a highway, the local authority may set a reasonable and safe limit that:

(a) decreases the limit ~~at an intersection~~ in an urban district;

(b) increases the limit within an urban district, but not to more than 65 miles an hour during the nighttime;

(c) decreases the limit outside an urban district, ~~but not to less than 35 miles an hour on a paved road or less than 25 miles an hour on an unpaved road~~; or

(d) decreases the limit in a school zone or in an area near a senior citizen center, as defined in 23-5-112, or a designated crosswalk that is close to a school or a senior citizen center to not less than 80%, rounded down to the nearest whole number evenly divisible by 5, of the limit that would be set on the basis of an engineering and traffic investigation, but not less than 15 miles an hour. If warranted by an engineering and traffic investigation, a local authority may adopt variable speed limits to adapt to traffic conditions by time of day, provided that the variable limits comply with the provisions of 61-8-206.

(2) A board of county commissioners may set ~~limits, as provided in subsection (1)(c)~~, a speed limit of not less than 35 miles an hour on a paved road or less than 25 miles an hour on an unpaved road without conducting an engineering and traffic investigation on a county road.

(3) A local authority in its jurisdiction may determine the proper speed for all arterial streets and shall set a reasonable and safe limit on arterial streets that may be greater or less than the speed permitted under 61-8-303 for an urban district.

1 (4) (a) An altered limit established as authorized under this section is effective at all times or at other
2 times determined by the authority when appropriate signs giving notice of the altered limit are erected upon the
3 highway.

4 (b) If a local authority decreases a speed limit in a school zone, the local authority shall erect signs
5 conforming with the manual adopted by the department of transportation under 61-8-202 giving notice that the
6 school zone has been entered, of the altered speed limit and the penalty provided in 61-8-726, and that the
7 school zone has ended.

8 (5) Except as provided in subsection (1)(d), the commission has exclusive jurisdiction to set special
9 speed limits on all federal-aid highways or extensions of federal-aid highways in all municipalities or urban areas.
10 The commission shall set these limits in accordance with 61-8-309.

11 (6) A local authority establishing or altering the area of a school zone shall consult with the department
12 of transportation and the commission if the school zone includes a state highway or a federal-aid highway or
13 extension of a federal-aid highway.

14 (7) A local authority shall consult with district officials for a school when:

- 15 (a) establishing or altering the area of a school zone near the school; or
- 16 (b) setting a speed limit pursuant to subsection (1)(d) in a school zone near the school.

17 (8) A speed limit set on an unpaved road under subsection ~~(1)(e)~~ (2) must be the same for all types of
18 motor vehicles that may be operated on the road.

19 (9) The violation of a speed limit established under subsections (1)(a) through (1)(c) is a misdemeanor
20 offense and is punishable as provided in 61-8-711. The violation of a speed limit established under subsection
21 (1)(d) is a misdemeanor offense and is punishable as provided in 61-8-726."

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