

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

**REGARDING HOUSE BILL 2643
RELATING TO ALLOWING SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION TO INCREASE MAXIMUM
SPEED LIMIT BY 5 MPH**

FEBRUARY 17, 2016

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) is pleased to provide written testimony on House Bill 2643, which amends K.S.A. 8-1559 only as it applies to “all other highways” in K.S.A. 8-1558 by allowing the secretary (KDOT) to increase the existing maximum of 65 mph by 5 mph. This bill has no effect on urban districts, county or township highways, or separated multilane highways. In summary, the bill would allow us to raise the speed limit on our rural undivided highways to as high as 70 mph.

Should this bill pass, we will conduct an engineering study on specific corridors when requested to determine if the posted speed limit should be raised to 5 mph higher than the existing statutory limit of 65 mph.

Pertinent information that will be used in analysis includes data gathered from speed studies and crash analyses. A speed study identifies the 85th percentile speed of off-peak, free flowing traffic as the principle factor in establishing speeds limits. The 85th percentile speed is the speed at which 85 percent of the traffic travels at or below and generally indicates the safest operating speed for motorists based on roadway conditions. The potential for crashes is mostly a function of speed variation in the traffic stream, than on absolute speed. The purpose of a speed study is to identify that speed at which the speed variation will be least. Other factors that are considered include crash history, roadway geometry, parking, pedestrians, curves, adjacent development and engineering judgment.

Decisions to raise the speed limit by 5mph will be based on analysis of the studies using sound engineering principles and professional judgement. The Kansas Department of Transportation is neutral on HB 2643.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on HB2643.