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Sam Brownback, Governor

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE  
SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

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

**MARCH 11, 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 KDOT to raise the speed limit on state rural undivided highways to as high as 70 mph.

Pursuant to K.S.A. 8-1558 and 8-1559, the secretary of transportation has the authority to post maximum speed limits on rural undivided highways at 65 miles per hour. Currently, not all rural undivided highways under the secretary’s jurisdiction are posted at 65 miles per hour. Generally, rural undivided highways are posted at 55 miles per hour, 60 miles per hour or 65 miles per hour. The speed posted on a rural undivided highway is posted at a speed that has been determined appropriate based on a study or information or circumstances known to KDOT.

Should this bill pass, decisions by KDOT to raise the speed limit by 5 mph will be based on studies using sound engineering principles and professional judgement. KDOT will conduct studies on specific corridors when requested to determine if the posted speed limit could safely be raised to 5 mph higher than the existing statutory limit of 65 mph.

Pertinent information that will be used in such studies includes data gathered from speed studies and crash analyses. A speed study identifies the 85th percentile speed of off-peak, free flowing traffic which 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. Other factors that are considered include crash history, roadway geometry, parking, the potential for pedestrians, curves, adjacent development and engineering judgment.

As indicated, passage of the bill will not result in an immediate 5 mph increase in speed limits on all eligible highways. Rather, increase in speed limits on eligible highways will be based on those factors cited above. The Kansas Department of Transportation is neutral on HB 2643.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on HB2643