

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

April 18, 2005 Hearing Room C

1:00 P.M. Tapes 50 - 51

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rep. George Gilman, Chair

Rep. Terry Beyer, Vice-Chair

Rep. Chuck Burley, Vice-Chair

Rep. Deborah Boone

Rep. Scott Bruun

Rep. Dave Hunt

Rep. Kim Thatcher

STAFF PRESENT: Patrick Brennan, Committee Administrator

Mike Reiley, Committee Assistant

MEASURES/ISSUES HEARD:

HB 3252 – Public Hearing

These minutes are in compliance with Senate and House Rules. Only text enclosed in quotation marks reports a speaker's exact words. For complete contents, please refer to the tapes.

TAPE/#	Speaker	Comments
---------------	----------------	-----------------

TAPE 50, A

003	Chair Gilman	Calls the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. Opens a public hearing on HB 3252.
-----	--------------	--

HB 3252 – PUBLIC HEARING

007	Patrick Brennan	Committee Administrator. Introduces HB 3252. Notes the written testimony of Gail Achterman, member of the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC), submitted by Joan Plank in opposition to HB 3252 (EXHIBIT A) .
018	John Tongue, M.D.	Speed Zone Review Panel Member, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). Submits prepared testimony and the report “Recommendation for Setting Speed Limits on Interstate Highways in Oregon” and testifies in opposition to HB 3252 (EXHIBIT B) . Addresses the “Eight Reasons to approve Higher Speed Limits” (EXHIBIT B) .
124	Jim Anderson	Oregon Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians. Submits and reads prepared testimony in opposition to HB 3252 (EXHIBIT C) .
197	Anderson	Submits and highlights prepared testimony from Brant Williams, Chair of the Oregon Speed Zone Review Panel and Director of the Office of Transportation for the City of Portland in opposition to HB 3252 (EXHIBIT D) .
230	Anderson	Notes that the fact that fuel prices are at an all-time high is another reason not to pass HB 3252.
239	Rep. Thatcher	Asks who makes up the Oregon Speed Zone Review Panel.
243	Tongue	Explains the makeup of the panel and notes that the members are listed at the back of the report “Recommendation for Setting Speed Limits on Interstate Highways in Oregon” (EXHIBIT B) .
246	Rep. Hunt	Asks how the review panel process could be improved.
250	Tongue	Opines that the process was “quintessential Oregon democracy.”
258	Rep. Burley	Cites a report from ODOT engineers that recommended a higher speed limit.
266	Tongue	Answers that the Speed Zone Review Panel disagrees with the report.

274	Rep. Burley	Asks for the reasons the review panel disagreed with the findings.
280	Tongue	Answers that the review panel focused on driving behavior, while the engineers looked at the capacity of the roadway itself.
286	Rep. Boone	Speaks in opposition to HB 3252. Points out that stopping distance is increased at higher speeds, and speaks of the dangers of obstacles, young inexperienced drivers and weather conditions.
320	Tongue	Explains the “third collision” when the car stops, then the body stops, then the organs in the body stop.
326	Rep. Boone	Discusses the cost and health effects on patients and the medical system.
348	Tongue	Explains the number of head injuries from motor vehicles and their effect on society.
361	Rep. Boone	Points out that other drivers do not even slow down while passing the site of an accident.
390	Mark Koberstein	Chair, Oregon Transportation Safety Committee. Submits and reads prepared testimony in opposition to HB 3252 (EXHIBIT E).

TAPE 51, A

001	Koberstein	Continues reading prepared testimony.
047	Mike Lavery	Board President, Alliance for Community Traffic Safety, Oregon Transportation Safety Committee. Submits and summarizes prepared testimony in opposition to HB 3252 (EXHIBIT F).
121	Rep. Thatcher	Asks about the effect of highway speed differentials on traffic statistics.
126	Koberstein	Acknowledges that speed differentials are a concern.
133	Rep. Thatcher	Asks if there have been efforts to lower the current speed limit with the goal of saving lives.

140	Koberstein	Points out that the police are too busy dealing with other important issues to address the issue. Notes that the speed limit on each segment of roadway needs to be addressed separately.
160	Elliott Eki	Director, Public and Government Affairs, American Automobile Association (AAA) of Oregon. Submits and summarizes prepared testimony in opposition to HB 3252 (EXHIBIT G) .
218	Rep. Thatcher	Asks if raising the speed limit would decrease the speed differentials.
222	Eki	Argues against increasing speed differentials.
247	Rep. Boone	Mentions that when driving overseas, the left lane is for passing.
265	Lieutenant Gary G. Miller	Assistant Director, Patrol Services Division, Oregon State Police. Submits and summarizes prepared testimony regarding HB 3252 (EXHIBIT H) .
300	Rep. Beyer	Asks how much the car-versus-truck speed differential played in the panel's decision.
311	Miller	Explains the work done on the panel and notes that there was no evidence for either side of the argument.
334	Rep. Beyer	Discusses raising car speed limits and truck limits.
345	Miller	Describes the issue and notes that it was a factor in his decision.
355	Rep. Burley	Asks about recommendations that suggest an increased speed limit.
393	Miller	Answers that any increase in speed limits will cause problems at some point in the future.

TAPE 50, B

004	Rep. Burley	Asks if a driver would receive a ticket for driving under the speed limit if the speed limit was raised.
-----	-------------	--

007	Miller	Answers that if they were in the right lane and driving appropriately they would not.
015	Troy Costales	Manager, Transportation Safety Division, ODOT. Submits and summarizes prepared testimony expressing concern about HB 3252 (EXHIBIT I) .
065	Costales	Describes driving in Europe and notes that higher the speed limits usually are accompanied by greater speed differentials.
136	Rep. Burley	Asks about the engineers' report recommendation to raise the speed limits and why the speed cannot be raised on I-84 in eastern Oregon.
148	Costales	Describes the variables and elements that were considered when making the decision and notes that it was not unanimous.
174	Rep. Burley	Lists the variables considered when evaluating speed limits. Asks for criteria for road design.
193	Costales	Offers to provide the information at a later time.
196	Rep. Burley	Notes that fatality rates were higher in the period from 1974-86 when the speed limit was 55 miles per hour, than after it was increased to 65 miles per hour.
210	Costales	Responds that his office addresses the number of deaths rather than a death rate.
227	Rep. Burley	Notes that the insurance companies work on rates. Cites statistics and asks if they are significant.
238	Costales	Responds that when the speed limit was raised the average death count went up by seven.
240	Rep. Burley	Asks if road and vehicle safety has improved.
246	Costales	Answers yes, but notes that "humans have not improved" in their driving ability or ability to withstand a crash. Notes that in every state, when speed limits have been increased, deaths and injuries have gone up.

268	Rep. Burley	Cites statistics and argues that safety is good on the interstate freeways.
272	Costales	Concurs.
276	Rep. Burley	Asks if raising the speed limit five miles per hour would be acceptable.
287	Costales	Describes speed carryover to connecting roads. Notes work zones that are coming and the potential for incident.
316	Rep. Burley	Asks for an explanation of the 85th percentile figure cited in the report.
322	Costales	Answers that it means that 85 percent of the traffic is traveling that speed or lower and notes the issues as to whether it should be used.
342	Rep. Burley	Asks about the data for I-5 at Wilsonville that measures the 85th percentile for speed at 74.6 miles per hour.
348	Costales	Explains the results and the data.
357	Rep. Burley	Cites ODOT engineer Doug Tindall's testimony regarding speed limits and wonders how it correlates to the 85th percentile.
372	Costales	Answers that the testimony is correct from an engineering point of view but does not account for other factors.
382	Rep. Burley	Notes Mr. Costales's testimony that HB 3252 does not give ODOT the flexibility for changing speed limits.
390	Rep. Boone	Points out the emergency services in some Oregon towns are limited.

TAPE 51, B

003	Carl Thatcher	Keizer resident. Testifies in support of HB 3252. Argues that people have the right to drive at the speed they feel comfortable driving.
024	Rep. Beyer	Expresses thanks that someone spoke in favor of HB 3252.

EXHIBIT SUMMARY

- A. HB 3252, prepared testimony of Gail Achterman, Joan Plank, 3 pp
- B. HB 3252, prepared testimony, information and report, "Recommendation for Setting Speed Limits on Interstate Highways in Oregon", John Tongue, 23 pp
- C. HB 3252, prepared testimony, Jim Anderson, 2 pp
- D. HB 3252, prepared testimony of Brant Williams, Jim Anderson, 6 pp
- E. HB 3252, prepared testimony, Mark Koberstein, 2 pp
- F. HB 3252, prepared testimony, Mike Lavery, 5 pp
- G. HB 3252, prepared testimony, Elliott Eki, 2 pp
- H. HB 3252, prepared testimony and information, Gary Miller, 5 pp
- I. HB 3252, prepared testimony and information, Troy Costales, 5 pp