

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RULES, ELECTIONS, AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

**May 6, 1999 Hearing Room D**

**3:30 P.M. Tape 56**

**MEMBERS PRESENT: Rep. Mark Simmons, Chair**

**Rep. Richard Devlin, Vice-Chair**

**Rep. Bruce Starr, Vice-Chair**

**Rep. Jason Atkinson**

**Rep. Chris Beck**

**Rep. Roger Beyer**

**Rep. Randall Edwards**

**Rep. Kevin Mannix**

**Rep. Jim Welsh**

**Rep. Max Williams**

**MEMBER EXCUSED: Rep. Dan Gardner**

**Rep. Kitty Piercy**

**STAFF PRESENT: Cletus B. Moore, Jr., Administrator**

**Kevin E. Wells, Administrative Support**

**MEASURE/ISSUES HEARD: SB 558 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 56, A		

002	Chair Simmons	Opens meeting at 3:40 p.m. Explains the agenda for the day. Opens Public Hearing SB 558. Asks for staff summary.
<b><u>SB 558 PUBLIC HEARING</u></b>		
015	Cletus Moore	Administrator. Explains SB 558 allows for increased speed limits <b>(EXHIBITS A, B, C AND D)</b> .
018	Senator Randy Miller	District 13. Testifies in support of SB 558. States that the safe driving practices of Oregonians warrants an increase in the speed limit. Notes that most drivers on Interstate 5 currently exceed the speed limit.
070	Sen. Miller	Notes that SB 558 does not require any posted speed limit be increased, but only authorizes the increase if authorities deem it appropriate. Comments on the previous speed limit of 70 miles per hour (MPH). Stresses SB 558 is a reflection of the safe behavior of Oregonians.
112	Rep. Edwards	Asks how many other states have raised speed limits.
114	Sen. Miller	Replies that 37 states have increased their speed limit from 65 MPH.
120	Rep. Edwards	Asks how many states have 75 MPH as their maximum speed limit.
122	Sen. Miller	Answer that 11 states have 75 MPH as their speed limit
125	Rep. Beck	Asks if a nighttime speed limit has been considered.
136	Sen. Miller	Responds that the question is whether there should be a rule (i.e. drive reasonably for the conditions) or a straight speed limit. States that experts and local officials need to make the decision for each road.
147	Rep. Beck	Asks if the speed limit was lowered initially as a conservation effort.
150	Sen. Miller	Agrees that was the case. Explains that the highway safety lobby worked to keep the speed limit reduced.
156	Rep. Beck	Asks if there is any reason to retain conservation as a reason for lower speed limits.
161	Sen. Miller	Points out that many of today's cars are more fuel efficient at higher speeds. Emphasizes that raising the speed limit is a safety issue.
180	Rep. Mannix	Asks if it would be appropriate to refer SB 558 to the electorate, as there will be

		more state police working on highways at the time it is enacted.
193	Sen. Miller	Supports referring SB 558 to the people, if the Governor continues to oppose the bill on faulty assumptions.
200	Rep. Mannix	Asks if the Governor will reconsider his position.
204	Chair Simmons	Notes the possibility of attaching SB 558 to the funding for additional state police troopers.
206	Rep. Mannix	Suggests Ways and Means may not appreciate that move.
209	Vice-Chair Devlin	Asks if people will exceed the new speed limit as they exceed the current limit; will crashes at these higher speeds be more fatalities.
232	Sen. Miller	Emphasizes that other states have not experienced people driving faster when the speed limit increased. States that SB 558 brings statute in line with real world practice without compromising safety.
251	Vice-Chair Devlin	Asks if people can reasonably disagree, noting that experts will testify, with conclusive data, on both sides of the issue.
262	Sen. Miller	Responds that a statistical analysis can be produced to demonstrate anything. States that facts support increasing the speed limit, while figures can be manufactured to demonstrate the opposite.
270	Rep. Welsh	Discusses current problems on the highways: slow drivers and the differential speed between cars and large trucks.
290	Sen. Miller	Replies that the difference of speed between trucks and cars is a problem. Comments on slow drivers. Suggests that slow drivers be pulled over for impeding the flow of traffic.
313	Rep. Edwards	Discusses section 4 and ways to penalize those who exceed 75 MPH.
336	Sen. Miller	Explains why the 75 MPH limit was chosen.
360	Rep. Edwards	Asks if there has been any discussion about the "penalty piece."
365	Sen. Miller.	Suggests that the greater the speed over the speed limit the greater the penalty should be.
371	Chair Simmons	Closes Public Hearing SB 558. Adjourns the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

Submitted By, Reviewed By,

Kevin E. Wells, Cletus B. Moore, Jr.,  
Administrative Support Administrator

**EXHIBIT SUMMARY**

**A ñ SB 558, written testimony, staff, 1 p.**

**B ñ SB 558, written testimony, Bennet Langlotz, 8 pp.**

**C ñ SB 558, written testimony, Bennet Langlotz, 2 pp.**

**D ñ SB 558, written testimony, Ken Ray, 1 p.**