

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE - MINUTES

MARCH 10, 1977

3:15 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Hayes Mr. May  
Mr. Demers Mr. Jacobsen  
Mr. Glover Mrs. Westall  
Mr. Harmon

GUESTS PRESENT: Carl Chaplin, WNCC  
Ted Fawcett, WNCC  
Sara Chaplin  
Leon Alexander  
Marilyn Vasey, WNCC  
Lori Larson, WNCC  
Patti Barron, WNCC  
Pat Bates, Bur. of Alcohol & Drug Abuse  
John Arambury  
Linda Gardner  
Dan Hussey  
Samuel J. Marber  
Art Rader, National Drivers Association  
Howard Hill, Director of Motor Vehicles  
Col. James Lambert, Nevada Highway Patrol  
Grant Bastian, Director, Highway Department  
John Borda, Office of Traffic Safety  
Bob Guinn, Nevada Transport Association  
John Ciariedella,  
Dale Goodman, Assemblyman  
Virgil Anderson, AAA

AB 295

Mr. Dale Goodman, Assemblyman, sponsor of AB 295, spoke in favor of the measure. Copies of Amendment No. 214 A were supplied the Committee. The purpose of the amendment is to provide a \$10 fine for violation of the established speed limit. The change also specifies that demerit points will not be assessed against the driver so that his insurance will not be effected. (EXHIBIT "A")

Mr. Demers asked if this measure expanded or took away some of the penalties for speeding, and also how this compared to the Montana law. He was told this was very similar to the Montana law.

Chairman Hayes asked why the proposed fine was \$10 and was told by the sponsor that he felt prospects for passage were more favorable with this amount.

Mr. Art Rader, National Drivers Association said his organization was totally in favor of AB 295. (For Mr. Raders testimony see EXHIBIT "B")

Mr. Rader discussed handout material on newspaper clippings pertaining to news from other states and their actions in relation to the 55 m.p.h. speed limit, questioning the safety benefits derived from the lower speed limit. (EXHIBIT "C")

Mr. Demers commented that the speed limit came into effect as an energy saving device, not as a traffic safety device.

Mr. Rader said the safety factor was now the emphasis and that was why he was addressing that factor. He further stated that passage of AB 295 would not result in loss of Federal highway funds.

Mr. Samuel J. Marber also spoke in favor of AB 295, emphasizing the lack of enforcement which he believes engenders disrespect of law. He felt the law enforcement agencies should devote more time to properly marking highway hazards, and commented further on the small number of traffic control officers on the highways in the rural areas.

Mr. Marber also questioned the safety benefits of the 55 m.p.h limit.

Mr. John Borda, Director, Office of Traffic Safety, refuted testimony of Mr. Rader, supplying the Committee with statistics that proved the 55 m.p.h. limit did result in fewer traffic fatalities. (See EXHIBIT "D" and EXHIBIT "E")

Mr. Border stated that, according to information available, the economic cost of a life was approximately \$200,000; therefore the lives saved by the lower speed limit was a great saving in money.

Fifteen of the 18 western states are in favor of keeping the 55 m.p.h. The Federal Government has not as yet taken action against the states who have negated the speed limit by lessening penalties but it is believed the new administration will move in that direction. The energy crisis is a reality and conservation measures in this direction have been promised by the new administration.

Mr. Demers asked that if the 55 m.p.h. limit was a life saving factor, why did Idaho, who had modified the law, experienced a decrease in traffic fatalities.

Mr. Borda stated he did not know the answer to this, perhaps there were other factors involved. Of the five states that have weakened the law, their combined fatality average was down one percent while the rest of the nation was down 17%. Only one of the five states had a decrease in fatalities.

Chairman Hayes asked how Nevada's fatality rate compared to other states before the speed limit took effect.

Mr. Borda said that Nevada had the highest rate in the nation. The death rate is now much lower per mile traveled. Compliance to the 55 m.p.h. is voluntary in Nevada as there are insufficient Highway Patrolmen to strictly enforce the law. If the law were weakened the voluntary compliance we now have would also be weakened. The younger people were involved in a higher number of accidents because more of the older people voluntarily complied with law. Speed is a definite

factor in highway death toll.

Mr. Demers asked Mr. Borda's feelings on partial removal of speed limit in selected areas. Could the Department relax standards in some parts of the State?

Mr. Borda stated he was not in opposition to raising the speed limit in some rural areas.

Mr. Demers suggested removing the limit in specified areas for a specified time and judge the results in view of accident increase or decrease. He was told this information was available from previous studies.

Col. James Lambert, Nevada Highway Patrol opposed AB 295. He reiterated the 55 m.p.h. limit was passed as a fuel conservation device; the safety factor was a great plus. The higher the speed the greater the damage resulting and the more serious the injuries. Everyone wishes for personal liberty to do as they choose but the safety of the motoring public is more important than the individual whim. The basic objective of the Highway Patrol is the safe movement of traffic.

Col. Lambert stated further that the Highway Patrol did not have enough men to enforce the speed limit; it must be voluntary compliance of the citizens.

Mr. Demers pursued the subject of experimentation with the speed limit, commenting that there was something that caused the fatalities to decrease in the state that had weakened the law.

Co. Lambert replied Idaho had put more troopers in the high fatality areas and good enforcement was a factor.

Mr. Jacobsen asked Col. Lambert's opinion of demerit points.

Col. Lambert did not think demerit points were a fair way to rate insurance premiums.

Mr. Grant Bastian, Director, Highway Department, stated that statistics indicate that reduction of speed saves lives and saves fuel. He reiterated that if the new administration became more conscience in checking on the enforcement of the speed laws, those who had weakened the law would be in trouble.

Mr. Robert Guinn, Nevada Motor Transport, spoke in opposition to AB 295, outlining the history of the measure. When the 55 m.p.h. was enacted, it was proposed that the limit be set at 50 m.p.h. A 65 m.p.h. had been voted down and this was a compromise.

Mr. Glover asked if Mr. Guinn's Organization had information as to the most efficient speed.

Mr. Guinn replied that the slower the speed the more number of miles traveled on a gallon of gasoline. Time is another factor. 55 m.p.h. is the most efficient speed.

Mr. Dan Hussy, Chief prosecutor for the City of Las Vegas, spoke in favor of the bill. He is of the opinion that speed is not the major factor in highway fatalities. Traveling at a slow rate of speed is also dangerous. More fatal accidents occur in metropolitan areas and more are caused by alcohol and drug abuse. He stated it was unjust to increase insurance premiums because of speeding violations. The \$10 fine specified in AB 295 was more than enough penalty. The punishment should fit the crime.

AB 358

Mr. Leon Alexander spoke in favor of this measure. The reinstatement of a drivers license was a great incentive to an alcohol or drug abuser to seek help in rehabilitation. He based this contention on personal experience.

Pat Bates, State Coordinator, Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Abuse, supported the intent of the bill but suggested a change in Section 1. (For Ms. Bate's testimony, see EXHIBIT "F").

Mr. Virgil Anderson, AAA, supported the bill. They have participated nationally in rehabilitation programs.

Mr. Howard Hill, Director, Department of Motor Vehicles, stated they supported AB 358, and they saw no problem with Ms. Bates amendment. The Department also had a proposed amendment. Mr. Hill presented copies to the Committee. (EXHIBIT "G")

AB 397

Mr. John Ciardelli, Department of Motor Vehicles, supported this measure and discussed portions of the bill. He suggested that on page 2, line 12 the wording be added "that all license plates and registration certificates be turned in to the Department before any credit can be allowed." (See EXHIBIT "F"). The Department thinks this is good legislation.

AB 370

Mr. Howard Hill, Director of Department of Motor Vehicles, opposed this measure because it presents too many problems in determination of a "hardship case". This bill allows under a number of circumstances, someone 14 or 15 years of age to apply for a drivers license for special reasons. The problem is that there is no way for the Department to judge what is adequate transportation and what is inadequate. Also it is going to be almost impossible to follow through on those that are issued a license.

Chairman Hayes stated this was intended to be a permanent license and it would be unnecessary to follow through if the need was determined and the license issued. There is a law in California similar to this.

Mr. Hill stated California did not give a permanent license to a junior. They had the problem of follow through and getting the licenses revoked once the circumstances changed and the need no longer existed.

Chairman Hayes asked if this legislation would be more palatable if the special licenses were confined to 15 and 16 year olds.

Mr. Hill stated this would present the same problems.

Chairman Hayes stated this legislation gave the Department a means to issue a special license when a real hardship case existed; and the Department does not now have the means to do this.

Mr. Demers was in favor of giving the Director authority to issue a special license upon the presentation of proper documentation of a "hardship case". The Director would make the judgement as to the need. Would this be too much of a burden?

Mr. Hill said the intent of the word "hardship" in this statute differs from the intent of the word in other statutes. The intent of "hardship" in other statutes was the necessity of a drivers license in order to earn a livelihood.

Chairman Hayes stated it was the intent of AB 397 that the need be determined by the Director.

Mr. Hill stated he did not object to the authority but the broader the legislation the more the requests the Department would get. Upon questioning by the Committee, Mr. Hill stated they got approximately 30 requests a year for special permits. The only basis now for the request is that the school does not provide transportation.

Mr. Demers suggested the Department make rules and regulations governing this area and only the director have the authority to make determinations.

Mr. Hill replied that if this were done he would rather the Department have the authority rather than limit it to the director. "I don't think you can put into law and into rules and regulations every instance that might deserve consideration. I would suggest a carte blanche authority to the Department or kill the measure. I think many people will take advantage of this. Even with carte blanche authority the Department would establish guide lines."

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Mr. Jacobsen asked if there were cases where licenses had been revoked and was told when the school provided the transportation and when the privilege license was abused.

Chairman Hayes appointed Mr. Harmon, Mr. Demers and Mrs. Westall to a subcommittee to study AB 295.

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

*M. Robertson*

M. Robertson, Secretary

ASSEMBLY ACTION	SENATE ACTION	ASSEMBLY / SENATE AMENDMENT BLANK
Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Lost <input type="checkbox"/> Date: _____ Initial: _____ Concurred in <input type="checkbox"/> Not concurred in <input type="checkbox"/> Date: _____ Initial: _____	Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Lost <input type="checkbox"/> Date: _____ Initial: _____ Concurred in <input type="checkbox"/> Not concurred in <input type="checkbox"/> Date: _____ Initial: _____	Amendments to Assembly / Senate Bill / Joint Resolution No. <u>295</u> (BDR <u>43-41</u> ) Proposed by <u>Committee on Transportation</u> <hr/> <div style="text-align: right;"><i>Exhibit "A"</i></div>

1977 Amendment N<sup>o</sup> 214 A



Amend section 1, page 1, line 1, after "Section 1." insert:

"NRS 483.470 is hereby amended to read as follows:

483.470 1. The department [is hereby authorized to] may suspend the license of a driver without preliminary hearing upon a showing by its records or other sufficient evidence that the licensee:

- (a) Has committed an offense for which mandatory revocation of license is required upon conviction;

Form 1a (Amendment Blank) 3044A

Drafted by LP:ml Date 2-28-77

To 6

- (b) Has been involved as a driver in any accident resulting in the death or personal injury of another or serious property damage;
- (c) Is an habitually reckless or negligent driver of a motor vehicle;
- (d) Is an habitual violator of the traffic laws;
- (e) Is physically or mentally incompetent to drive a motor vehicle;
- (f) Has permitted an unlawful or fraudulent use of such license;
- (g) Has committed an offense in another state which if committed in this state would be grounds for suspension or revocation; or
- (h) Has failed or refused to comply with the terms and conditions of issuance of a restricted license.

2. As used in this section, "traffic violation" means conviction on a charge involving a moving traffic violation in any municipal court, justice's court or district court in the State of Nevada, and includes a finding by a juvenile court pursuant to NRS 62.083 that a child has violated a traffic law or ordinance other than one governing standing or parking.

3. The department shall establish a uniform system of demerit points for various traffic violations occurring within the State of Nevada affecting any holder of a driver's license issued by the department.

4. Such system shall be a running system of demerits covering a period of 12 months next preceding any date on which a licensee may be called before the department to show cause as to why his driver's license should not be suspended.

5. Such system shall be uniform in its operation and the department shall set up a system of demerits for each traffic violation coming under this section, depending upon the gravity of such violation, on a scale of one demerit point for a minor violation of any traffic law to eight demerit points for an extremely serious violation of the law governing traffic violations. In the event of conviction of two or more traffic violations committed on a single occasion, points shall be assessed for one offense, and if the point values differ, points shall be assessed for the offense having the greater point value. Details of the violation shall be submitted to the department by the court where the conviction is obtained. The department may provide for a graduated system of demerits within each category of violations according to the extent to which the traffic law was violated.

6. The department shall not assess demerit points for any violation of the national maximum speed limit.

7. When any driver has accumulated three or more demerit points, but less than 12, the department shall notify him of this fact. If, after the department mails such notice, the driver presents proof to the department that he has successfully completed a traffic safety school course, approved by the department, for the number of hours prescribed by the course, with the approval of the department as constituting a course of instruction, the department shall cancel three demerit points from his driving record, pursuant to this subsection; but if such driver accumulates 12 or more demerit points before completing the traffic safety school, he [will not be] entitled to have demerit points canceled upon completion of such course, but shall have his license suspended. A person shall be allowed to attend only once in 12 months for the purpose of reducing his demerit points. The three demerit points can only be canceled from a driver's record during the 12-month period immediately following the driver's successful completion of the traffic safety school.

is not



[7.] 8. Any three-demerit-point reduction [shall apply] applies only to the demerit record of the driver and shall not affect his driving record with the department or insurance record.

[8.] 9. When any licensee has accumulated 12 or more demerit points the department shall suspend the license of such licensee until the total of his demerits has dropped below 12 demerits in the next preceding 12 months.

[9.] 10. The director of the department of motor vehicles [is hereby empowered to] may set up a scale of demerit values for each traffic violation.

[10.] 11. Upon suspending the license of any person as authorized in this

section, the department shall immediately notify the licensee in writing, and upon his request shall afford him an opportunity for a hearing as early as practical within not to exceed 20 days after receipt of such request in the county wherein the licensee resides unless the department and the licensee agree that such hearing may be held in some other county. Upon such hearing the administrator, or his duly authorized agent, may administer oaths and may issue subpoenas for the attendance of witnesses and the production of relevant books and papers, and may require a reexamination of the licensee. Upon such hearing the department shall either rescind its order of suspension or, good cause appearing therefor, may extend the suspension of such license or revoke such license.

Sec. 2."

Amend section 1, page 1, line 2, before "It" insert "1."

Amend section 1, page 1, line 4, delete "1." and insert "[1.] (a)".

Amend section 1, page 1, line 6, delete "2." and insert "[2.] (b)".

Amend section 1, page 1, line 8, delete "3." and insert "[3.] (c)".

Amend section 1, page 1, line 10, delete "[4." and insert "[4.] (d)".

Amend section 1, page 1, line 11, delete the closed bracket.

Amend section 1, page 1, after line 11 insert:

"2. A person who violates paragraph (d) of subsection 1 shall be fined not more than \$10."

Amend the bill as a whole by adding a new section, designated section 3, following section 1, to read as follows:

"Sec. 3. Chapter 698 of NRS is hereby amended by adding thereto a new section to read as follows:

No insurer may refuse to issue, reduce limits of, or increase the premium of any automobile liability insurance policy issued to a resident of this state for the sole reason that the policyholder has been convicted of violating the national maximum speed limit."

Amend the title of the bill on the first line by deleting

"repealing" and inserting

"limiting the penalty for violating".

This report against the national speed limit has been prepared by Art Rader and members of the Southern Nevada Chapter, National Drivers Association.

The National Drivers Association was formed in November, 1976 in Arlington, Virginia as a political action group to protect the rights of private car owners.

The group wants to end the war government officials and agencies have declared on the private automobile. The association is concerned about highway safety and energy conservation but believes there are better ways to achieve those goals without a national speed limit that forces all motorists to drive to the lowest common denominator.

The national group has the backing of Road Test Magazine and Car & Driver Magazine and will open a lobby office in Washington D.C. Local chapters of the group are forming all across the nation.

Briefly, the National Drivers Association is against the national speed limit for these reasons.

1. It is manifestly an unenforceable law, the equivalent of a latter day prohibition. Police resources ought properly be directed at real crime.
2. It discriminates against automobile owners. No other group has been asked to help shoulder the burden of safety and conservation. The task has been handed to the motoring public alone. Private pilots are not required to fly slower. Railroad trains are not required to travel slower. Private and commercial river and intercoastal boats are not required to slow down. Commercial airlines have voluntarily shaved a few minutes off their transcontinental routes to save fuel, but the sacrifice in mobility and travel time is nowhere near what has been imposed on the motorists.
3. The speed law is patently unAmerican. It is simply not the American way to pass a comprehensive law that applies to all citizens without exception. There are exemptions to such universal laws as military conscription and taxes. We get into trouble in this nation when we try to enforce a blanket law that applies everywhere at all times. OSHA is a good example of this type of abusive, all-encompassing law. The speed limit is another example.

It is simply not fair to pass a law that denies the right to fast, safe and economical travel. Because some people cannot drive fast, safe and economically, is it fair to make EVERYONE drive to that lowest common denominator? To do so ignores the fact there are millions of Americans who have a valid and probably constitutional right to travel fast, safe and economically.

4. Denies all other reasons for lower deaths. Is the speed limit constitutional? Does Congress have the right to inflict this law upon the individual states by blackmailing them with the threatened loss of Federal funds? Is this law not a violation of the basic constitutional guarantee of freedom of movement?

5. The U.S. Constitution invented a "federal" form of government.

"Federal" means that the states and the central government share power and obligations, with the central government having the stronger role in the structure. But originally this did not mean the states were powerless and the central government totally dominant.

Yet this is what has come to pass in modern America, with a gradual erosion and abdication of "states rights" (an almost archaic expression today) to the central government. We see the consequences of this breakdown in the constitutionally-mandated sharing of power between the states and the central government in the incessantly increasing intervention of federal rules and regulations in our everyday lives.

One of the most used arguments against ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment during this session of the Legislature was the fear, real or imagined, that passage of the ERA would bring massive federal intrusions into our everyday lives.

If this was a valid reason to vote against the ERA, then it is most certainly a valid reason to fight against the national speed limit. The speed law is a monumental infringement of personal liberty by the gargantuan federal bureaucracy.

I can say without overdramatization that this Committee, this Legislature, and the 49 other state legislatures are the last defense against the abolition of the constitutional federal system and surrender of all power by the states to the central government.

Fight against the speed limit and you fight to save states rights. Fight against the speed limit and you begin the long march back to the traditional and proper balance of power between Washington, D.C. and the state.

The only defense for the speed limit is that somehow it does the greatest good for the greatest number. This theory that government ought to promote the good of the largest number is valid and has been around in Anglo-American culture at least since the 17th century. But this political-social theory has become so distorted in modern America that it denies all rights to minority viewpoints. This basically sound philosophy has been distorted to mean ever-increasing government attempts to "protect us from ourselves."

Recently this committee rebelled against the over-extension of the "greatest good for the greatest number" philosophy by voting to repeal the mandatory motorcycle helmet law. By the same logic used to repeal that unjust law, you must now also vote to lessen the penalties for violating the federal speed limit.

*E. Libert* "C"

## *R-J Viewpoint*

# Take federal control off speed limits

The 55 mile per hour speed limit experiment has failed.

In the name of energy conservation and safety, the federal government has attempted to force the mandatory speed limit on the American people.

Not since Prohibition has any law been met with such widespread disregard. Americans have made a conscious effort to disobey the 55 speed limit, buying citizens band radios in record numbers to help avoid being caught when they are speeding. And even those without radios regularly exceed the speed limit, both in Las Vegas and elsewhere in the nation, with only a mild fear of receiving a ticket.

On the local freeway, the average speed often approaches 70 miles per hour, which, of course, was once the authorized speed.

Many persons voluntarily slowed down when the energy crisis was in the headlines, but the sentiment for conservation which was felt at that time has disappeared.

Those who preach messages of conservation or safety have failed to convince the public that either purpose will be greatly served by maintaining a slow speed.

It is time to return the prerogative of speed setting to the state governments. Perhaps there will never be an era again when states, such as our own, will have sections of highway with unlimited speeds, but it is reasonable to expect that most states would opt for a 70 m.p.h. limit if given the opportunity to do so.

The advantages of an increased speed limit would be especially felt in Western states, including Nevada. It would greatly facilitate driving between Las Vegas and Reno and would be a welcome relief to the motorists who take Interstate 15 between here and southern California.

Many motorists frequenting the route to Los Angeles do not give a second thought to the speed limit as it is presently set and already travel at higher speeds, but for those who are conscious about staying within the law, an increase would be a blessing which might encourage more trips to our city.

The mandatory imposition of a federal speed limit is an example of the mounting control over our lives by a remote national bureaucracy. States such as ours went along with it when it was established because of the energy crisis and because a loss of federal funds was threatened.

It is time for federal control to be removed, and we hope our representatives in Washington, D. C. will take steps to see that states can again exercise their right to set speed limits which would be appropriate for their own conditions.

## Editorials...

# A Way To Improve Nevada's Speed Law

Members of the assembly in Carson City several days ago adopted a resolution urging Congress to change the speed limit in Nevada's rural areas to 65 miles an hour, instead of the present federally mandated "double nickle" outrage.

It was a disappointing response by the assemblymen to the statewide conviction that the 55 speed limit is a bum law.

Although we would favor a strong Nevada stand against this instance of federal intervention in this state's affairs by returning the "reasonable and proper" speed standard that distinguished Nevada before the feds flexed their political muscles, we have learned of a compromise that we can support.

The compromise was discussed in a letter received recently from Art Rader, director of the Southern Nevada Chapter of the National Drivers Association in Las Vegas. Rader suggests a speed law in Nevada patterned after what he describes as "Montana's famous speed law."

Rader explains his group is "dedicated to the abolition of the federal speed limit and other such nonsense that hampers the personal freedom and mobility of Nevada citizens."

He says his association is working with members of the legislature to introduce two resolutions — one which would memorialize Congress to return control of the speed limit to the individual states; and a second which would have the Nevada Legislature copy the "famous and brilliant Montana speed law."

That Montana law, which Rader praises so highly, has four basic points. 1) The maximum fine for exceeding the 55 miles an hour speed

limit in rural areas is \$5; 2) The conviction for exceeding the speed limit is not for speeding, but for wasting a resource (gasoline) currently in short supply; 3) No "points" on the 12-point driver penalty system may be charged against a driver for exceeding the 55 mph speed limit in rural areas; and 4) no insurance company may raise the premium rates of drivers convicted of violating the speed limit law.

Rader added that it is important to note Montana has exercised this law since 1974 with no penalties from the federal government. He says the various federal agents have never challenged the Montana law and have never threatened to withhold federal funds for highway construction in Montana because of the law. It was threats such as these that badgered lily-livered Nevada officials into accepting the federal mandate for a speed limit in Nevada.

We endorse the suggestion from Rader's group and would encourage members of the 1977 Nevada Legislature to adopt a copy of the Montana speed law. We don't think the Nevada solons need to worry or wait on the memorialization of Congress to take any action regarding the federal speed law because we are convinced the federal government acted without constitutional authority in imposing the nationwide speed limit. Whether or not Congress corrects its mistake, there is no valid federal legislation on speed limits — and the states are legally and constitutionally free to adopt whatever speed limits they are brave enough to legislate.

We would like to think Nevada legislators are at least as brave as their political cousins in Montana. — M

COMPARATIVE AUTOMOBILE DEATH RATES

MONTANA

IDAHO

NEVADA

Year	Number Deaths	Milage Rate*	Year	Number Deaths	Milage Rate*	Year	Number Deaths	Rate*
1973	323	5.8	1973	349	5.9	1973	267	6.2
1974	298	5.1	1974	327	5.5	1974	216	5.1
1975	299	5.1	1975	284	5.1	1975	221	5.0
1976	300	5.2	1976	280	4.8	1976	224	4.8
Death Reductions, 1973 to 1976: 7.5%			Death Reductions, 1973 to 1976: 20%			Death Reductions, 1973 to 1976: 16%		

Death Reductions,  
1973 to 1976 on National Level: 17%

Death Reductions or Increases,  
1973 to 1976, other states with  
modified 55 MPH enforcement:

- Wyoming - Plus 35%
- Nebraska - Minus 7%
- Oklahoma - Plus 5%

\* Number of fatals per hundred million  
miles traveled within state

THE NEVADA OFFICE OF TRAFFIC SAFETY;

AN ATTACK ON ITS PROPAGANDA FACTS & FIGURES

The Nevada Office of Traffic Safety has printed and circulated at public expense a pamphlet supporting the national speed limit. The pamphlet is an example of how a government agency can misrepresent facts and misinterpret figures to justify its continued existence by justifying the continued existence of the national speed limit. The pamphlet, shown on these following pages, is nothing more than an exercise in propaganda.

How so?

ITEM: The Office of Traffic Safety claims automobile deaths in Nevada have decreased annually under the federal speed limit.

TRUTH: In cold hard numbers, highway deaths in Nevada in 1974, first year of the national speed limit, were 216. In 1975 deaths were 221. In 1976 deaths were 224. The Office of Traffic Safety may plead that the death rate per miles driven has decreased under the speed limit, but what they are telling the public is that actual deaths have decreased. This is patently untrue.

In Montana and Idaho, two states that have reduced penalties for violations of the national speed limit, highway deaths are holding steady or declining.

In Montana, deaths were 298 (1974), 299 (1975) and 300 (1976). In Idaho, deaths were 327 (1974), 284 (1975) and 280 (1976). This is manifestly a better record than Nevada.

ITEM: The Office of Traffic Safety asserts, "there is every reason to believe that the lower speed limit was the primary factor in saving" lives since 1973.

TRUTH: Safety officials in other states and on the Federal level acknowledge that fatalities are down because of reduced driving, higher gasoline prices, improved safety features in recent-model automobiles, better emergency medical treatment on highways, removal of roadside crash hazards and more efficient police



patrols on highways. There is no proof that the speed limit is the primary cause of reduced fatalities.

ITEM: The Office of Traffic Safety claims, "fuel savings as a result of the new speed limit have been substantially improved."

TRUTH: Elsewhere in this report is a study commissioned by Motor Trend Magazine that indicates that at best the national speed limit saves fuel at a marginal rate of one to three percent. There is great suspicion that the speed limit wastes more fuel than it saves.

ITEM: The OTS asserts that an "average" driver of a 3,000 pound automobile driving on a road "perfectly dry and in good condition," requires these stopping distances:

From 70 MPH to zero.....336 feet (102 yards)  
 From 55 MPH to zero.....216 feet (72 yards)

These figures are blatantly wrong. Below are stopping distances revealed in road tests by leading automotive journals which indicate cars even much heavier than the OTS' mythical 3,000 pound auto can stop safely from 60 MPH, 70 MPH and 80 MPH in much shorter distances than OTS will admit.

<u>CAR BRAND</u>	<u>WEIGHT</u>	<u>80 MPH to 0 MPH</u>	<u>60 MPH to 0 MPH</u>
Plymouth Scirocco	1980 pounds	270 feet	155 feet
SOURCE: Road & Track Magazine, January 1977			
Pacer Wagon	3436 pounds	284 feet	176 feet
Pontiac Bonneville	4410 pounds	290 feet	184 feet
SOURCE: Road & Track Magazine, November 1976			

<u>CAR BRAND</u>	<u>WEIGHT</u>	<u>70 MPH to 0 MPH</u>
Jeep Cherokee	4150 pounds	257 feet
Source: Car & Driver Magazine, March 1977		
Chevrolet Caprice	3952 pounds	215 feet
SOURCE: Car & Driver Magazine, January 1977		
Ford LTD	5000 pounds	240 feet
SOURCE: Car & Driver Magazine, January 1977		
Volvo 242GL	2980 pounds	131 feet
SOURCE: Motor Trend Magazine, April 1975		

<u>CAR BRAND</u>	<u>WEIGHT</u>	<u>60 MPH to 0 MPH</u>
Buick Electra	5110 pounds	144 feet 10 inches
Ford Torino	4530 pounds	129 feet 8 inches
Ford Pinto	3010 pounds	133 feet 10 inches
Source: Motor Trend Magazine, April 1975		

<u>CAR BRAND</u>	<u>WEIGHT</u>	<u>70 MPH to 0 MPH</u>
Pontiac Astre	2848 pounds	214 feet
Source: Car & Driver Magazine, February 1977		

It is inescapably obvious that the Office of Traffic Safety has lied in its pamphlet to support a law that cannot be enforced and should be modified if not repealed. In this session of the Legislature we have seen lies by other state agencies, notably Nevada Industrial Commission, which misrepresented the true cost of proposed claims benefits increases. The Assembly refused to accept such deception by NIC. I believe it should reject similar deception by the OTS in its false support of the national speed limit.



THE STATE OF NEVADA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Each year in Nevada there are more persons killed in auto accidents than by crime. The 55 mile per hour speed limit has proven itself as an effective means of saving some of those lives.

I have urged the Nevada Highway Patrol to be vigorous in their enforcement of this law and I have encouraged the Office of Traffic Safety to continue in its efforts to persuasively gain more universal adherence to the law.

The 55 mile per hour speed limit is not a take it or leave it proposition. It's the law. But it's more than just the law.

Sincerely yours,

Mike O'Callaghan, Governor

## **SPEED : A GAME OF REACTIONS YOU NEVER CAN WIN.**

So you're a normal, healthy adult . . . alert, quick? Okay, let's just see how quick.

Pretend you're traveling down the highway at 70 miles per hour. You see an obstacle blocking the roadway some 100 yards away. You must stop.

First you see it. Then you move to put your foot on the brake. As an average person, that single reaction takes .75 seconds— $\frac{3}{4}$  of a second means it takes you at least 25 yards just for reaction at that speed.

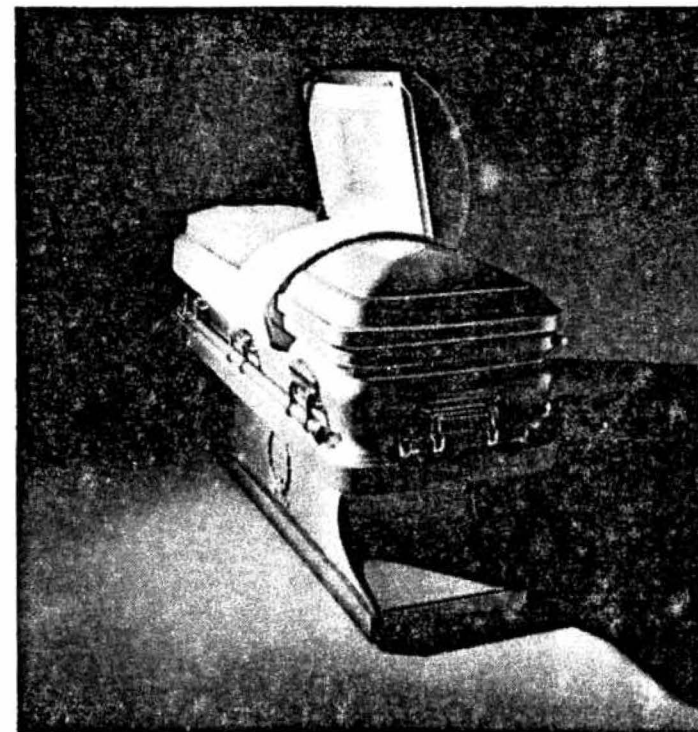
Then your brakes, which are in good condition, start taking hold. No matter how hard you press . . . it still will take 77 yards to stop the ton and a half of steel you are driving. In total, if your car is as safe as can be made . . . if the road is perfectly dry and in good condition . . . if you can see clearly ahead of you—under the best of conditions it will take you 102 yards to stop for that obstacle 100 yards away. That's the length of a football field, to react and stop.

That's how speed kills. At 55, under the same conditions, you would have been able to stop in 72 yards. Safe.

For Information:

**Nevada Office of Traffic Safety**  
Capitol Complex, Carson City, Nevada 89710

# **If you think the 55 mph speed limit is a "take it or leave it" proposition...**



# **You're dead wrong.**

# STAY ALIVE. DRIVE 55. IT'S MORE THAN JUST THE LAW.



**"THESE MEN TRY HARDER TO  
SAVE YOUR LIFE THAN YOU DO"**

In 1974, Congress passed the national law making the maximum speed limit 55 miles per hour on every road in our country.

The need was critical and immediate. Most importantly, thousands of lives were being lost each year which could be saved. In addition, with the fuel shortage, excessive speeds were an extravagance the nation could no longer afford.

Has the new law made a difference?

Consider for example that in 1974, the first year under the new speed limit, traffic fatalities were reduced in our state by 19 per cent compared to the previous year. That decrease has continued annually. In the 3 year period following the passage of the law, 150 or more people remained alive that otherwise may have been traffic fatalities in Nevada.

Nationally, there were 9,000 fewer traffic deaths in 1974 than in 1973. There is every reason to believe that the lower speed limit was the primary factor in saving these lives.

Fuel savings as a result of the new speed limit have been substantially improved. It is estimated that more than 25 million gallons of gasoline are being saved every day by motorists driving more slowly.

The facts bear out that perhaps no single law in history has ever had so direct, so broad, an impact on saving lives. Certainly, no other measure could have helped conserve our valuable fuel supply so well.

## SEE FOR YOURSELF HOW YOUR CHANCE OF DYING INCREASES AS SPEED INCREASES.

The chance of dying in a collision  
25 mph: 1 in 167  
35 mph: 1 in 111  
45 mph: 1 in 67  
55 mph: 1 in 40  
65 mph: 1 in 20  
75 mph: 1 in 8  
80+ ALMOST CERTAIN

## HOW GAS CONSUMPTION INCREASES WITH SPEED

Tests by the Federal Highway Administration indicate that fuel economy improvements ranging from 17.1 percent to 39.8 percent (depending on type of car) are possible by driving at 55 mph rather than 70 mph.

### Comparative Consumption Rates

<u>Miles/hour</u>	<u>Sub-compact</u>	<u>Compact</u>
30	31.45 mpg	21.33 mpg
40	35.19	21.33
50	33.05	18.94
55	31.91	18.17
60	30.78	17.40
70	22.82	15.36

<u>Miles/hour</u>	<u>Standard</u>	<u>Luxury</u>
30	20.33 mpg	18.33 mpg
40	20.00	19.28
50	17.50	15.62
55	16.84	14.92
60	16.17	14.22
70	14.86	12.74

According to Federal Highway Administration calculations, about a third of all vehicle miles are driven over highways and under conditions where speeds above 55 mph are possible. If all of the nation's highway users strictly observed the 55 mph speed limit on those highways, savings of about 200,000 barrels of gasoline a day could be achieved.

SOME RESEARCH WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ADMINISTERING  
THE FEDERAL SPEED LIMIT

BILL ENGLE, Assistant Engineer, Nevada Highway Department:

Claims Nevada must not decrease penalties for exceeding the national speed limit or, "we will lose \$50 million annual federal matching funds" for highway construction.

Claims he has been "told informally by local and regional federal officials" that altering the speed laws will definitely cause loss of federal funds.

-- Telephone interview at his Carson City office  
(885-5440) on February 28, 1977

GARY OWEN, Governor O'Callaghan's legislative coordinator:

Governor is opposed to changing the speed laws because it will definitely cause loss of federal funds.

-- Telephone interview at his Carson City office  
on February 21, 1977

DENNIS TATUM, Nevada Office of Traffic Safety:

Decreasing penalties for exceeding speed limit will certainly cause loss of federal funds.

-- Telephone interview on or about March 1, 1977

ELBERT GOATE, Montana Traffic Safety Office:

Federal Highway Administration has never threatened loss of federal funds because of modified Montana enforcement of 55 mph speed limit. Montana speed law enacted 1974.

Says his findings are there is no safety advantage in speed limit under 70 mph.

-- Telephone interview at his Helena, Montana office  
(406-449-3412) on February 16, 1977.

BOB PEARSON, Research Chief, Montana Legislative Counsel Bureau:

There has never been a threat to withhold highway matching funds because of Montana's speed laws.

-- Telephone interview at his Helena, Montana office  
(406 449-3064) on February 16, 1977.

GARY GARDEN, Montana Office of Traffic Safety:

Federal government has never challenged Montana's modified enforcement of speed limit as being in noncompliance with enforcement regulations.

Does not believe any speed limit under 70 mph is responsible for lower deaths. Believes key to decreasing deaths is vigorous enforcement of speed limit, no matter how high or low it is set.

-- Telephone interview at his Helena, Montana office on March 3, 1977 (406 449-2071)

CAPTAIN JOHN GRIFFITH, Montana Highway Patrol:

Montana has 152 highway patrol officers in the field. In 1976 they wrote 113,000 tickets. Have 78,000 miles of highway to patrol but concentrate enforcement on 5,000 mile interstate and primary road system. Do not patrol city streets in urban areas.

Believes 55 mph speed limit is unenforceable and arbitrarily too low. Favors 70 mph speed limit.

-- Telephone interview at his Helena, Montana office on March 3, 1977 (406 449-2079)

ALAN WILLIS, Senior Legal Analyst, Idaho State Legislature:

Idaho speed law, an exact copy of Montana law, enacted in 1974. Idaho has never been threatened by the loss of federal funds because of this law.

Idaho Legislative Counsel Bureau is currently amending the speed law to add its application to primary and interstate roads constructed since the law was enacted in 1974.

-- Telephone interview at his Boise, Idaho office on February 28, 1977 (208 384-2475)

TOM SIEMENS, Research Analyst, Idaho Office of Traffic Safety:

Idaho concentrates enforcement on its interstate freeway system because that is where bulk of high-speed traffic is located.

Believes reducing the speed limit to 55 mph is secondary cause of lower deaths. Feels that intense enforcement of a speed limit, no matter how high or low it is set, is the primary cause of reduced fatalities.

Believes 55 mph speed limit on interstates actually causes danger because cars all going at same speed tend to cluster together.

Idaho has never been threatened with loss of Federal funds because of its speed laws.

Reports there is an unpublished National Highway Traffic Safety Administration study that reveals only 20% of reduction in deaths in recent years is directly caused by the national speed limit.

-- Telephone interview at his Boise, Idaho office on March 4, 1977 (208 384-3533)

ELBERT STONE, Federal Highway Administration, Nevada office manager:

Montana and Idaho have lower observed speeds than Nevada.

Number of citations issued for speeding in Montana and Idaho are higher than in Nevada. Total citations issued for all causes is higher in Montana and Idaho than in Nevada.

Traditionally, the Federal Highway Administration has had a liberal policy of accepting state laws regulating enforcement and penalties for violating the national speed limit.

-- Telephone interview, his Carson City office on March 7, 1977 (885-5911)

WILLIAM FURNIER, Regional Counsel, Federal Highway Administration, San Francisco, California:

Passage of AB 295 will not of itself cause loss of federal matching highway construction funds in Nevada.

If, after passing AB 295, statistics compiled by the State of Nevada under an FHA mandate indicate "ineffective implementation" of the speed limit, the state could then and only then be subject to revocation of federal funds.

The loss of federal funds would happen only if the Federal Highway Administration believes that AB 295, enacted into law, was the direct cause of "ineffective implementation" of the speed limit.

-- Telephone interview at his San Francisco, Calif., office on March 7, 1977 (415 556-3895)

DICK RILLEY, Director of Public Affairs, Federal Highway Administration:

Substantiated the testimony of Elbert Stone and William Furnier.

-- Telephone interview at his Washington, D.C., office on March 7, 1977 (202 426-0648)

# Speed Of 70 Seems Best

SAN DIEGO (UPI) — Drivers in late model cars without speedometers to nag them about speeding are most comfortable traveling about 70 miles an hour on the highway, according to student safety researchers.

The conclusion was reached in a research project carried out by students at Texas A & M University, the school's Dr. Ronald S. Morris said in presenting a paper on the experiment recently in San Diego at the 14th annual symposium of the SAFE Association, an organization of safety equipment researchers, manufacturers and users.

"The experiment clearly demonstrates that the average comfortable speed is well above the existing national speed limit of 55 miles per hour," Morris told delegates.

"The analysis of our data resulted in an overall mean

comfortable speed of 69.94 miles per hour with a standard deviation of 4.425 miles per hour," he said. "From this it is reasonable to conclude that the probability that the entire population's comfortable speed is 55 miles per hour is essentially zero."

Morris, also secretary of the association, said 18 volunteer students drove both ways over an isolated segment of Interstate 30 west of Texarkana, Tex., during daylight hours when weather was dry and sunny.

The students used a 1970 Datsun 240Z, a 1973 Ford Torino station wagon and a 1973 GMC Sports Van selected to represent the range of commercially available passenger vehicles.

In each vehicle, the speedometer was masked. Road speeds were logged with a spe-

cial speed recorder placed in the rear seats and camouflaged so drivers did not know speed was being measured.

Each was instructed to "find a speed which is comfortable to you and maintain it," Morris said. As to purpose, the student volunteers were told only that the experiment was "intended to measure various human factors associated with driving."

Morris said he and graduate student Charles H. Berry Jr. theorized in setting up the experiment that any driver desiring "to remain legal" when the gap between comfortable speed and legal speed is wide would be "continually required to adjust his vehicle speed by throttle changes" and keep any eye on the speedometer.

"The net effect of this mismatch then will be increased control effort by the driver and consequently, increased

fatigue," he said. "Further, any relaxation of constant vigilance by the driver will result in a tendency to return to the comfortable speed."

The experiment showed differences in comfortable speeds for each vehicle with "mean" velocities of 66 miles an hour for the station wagon, 70 miles an hour for the sports car and 77 miles an hour for the van.

"The comfortable speed demonstrates that if the present speed limit of 55 miles per hour is to be continued, further research is needed in the areas of vehicle and roadway design to establish a more acceptable interface between inherent vehicle characteristics and legal speed limits," Morris concluded.

"If the difference between the comfortable speed and the legal speed is large, the driver is placed in a stressful and fatiguing situation.



1 1974 was a year of desperation. Millions of motorists all across the country reported late to work because a good portion of their early morning hours were spent playing a new game called "Find The Fuel." No one felt much like playing, particularly when the payoff might be as little as an eight- or ten-gallon drink, maximum. The motorist was rightly outraged. There could be no winner in such a game.

But the worst was yet to come. The government quickly upped the ante of desperation by responding in kind with another desperate move: The 55 mph speed limit was enacted by an unpopu-



# CATCH 55: THE NATIONAL SPEED LIMIT

Does Congress have enough sense to pound sand into a rat hole?

By Herb L. Adams

lar and essentially inoperative administration with the avowed intent of conserving precious gasoline. The government also undertook the task of printing millions upon millions of rationing coupons. "Just in case."

States quickly jumped into the act, many of them with "rationing" programs of their own. The government countered with its own national allocation plan, supposedly based on each state's own needs for fuels. Daylight saving time became the law of the land to help conserve heating oil.

Since then, of course, our Arab friends have resumed business as usual, if only for the time being. Permanent daylight saving time is gone, as are state's rationing schemes. All the threatened lawsuits which would have pitted state against federal government over allocation allotments are forgotten. Tensions have eased. For the time being.

But what about this offensive 55 mph speed limit? The bad news is well known; it's here to stay. Both houses of Congress have perpetuated the lowered maximum speed indefinitely. What about the ire of multitudes of Americans—often expressed violently during the so-called "crisis days"—against this most unpopular restriction?

Has it, in fact, saved enormous amounts of gasoline as promised?

No one knows. The federal officials whom one might suspect have such data have remained strangely silent. The Ford administration admitted that no one, *except* the oil industry itself, has any hard facts on what our real petroleum situation is.

Reason urges us to confess that we believe there is a distinct possibility that this 55-mph speed limit may actually be preventing us from using our finite fuel reserves most intelligently.

We're getting ahead of the story. When the 55 mph speed limit was first imposed it was because it seemed a quick means of saving gasoline and would affect all citizens equally. Raising the price of gasoline (which happened anyway) was rejected because of obvious increased hardships (proportionally) to lower income families.

Although the lowered speed limit might appear to be equal for all citizens, consider a Cadillac traveling at 55 mph and a Volkswagen cruising at 70 mph. The Cadillac is using approximately twice the fuel, even though it is traveling slower. It would be difficult to administer a law which would permit smaller, more economical cars to run faster but this would probably be fairer.

Before we look at an alternative means of saving gasoline, let's look at just how much the 55 mph speed limit might be saving. Figure #1 shows a typical full-size car's fuel usage at constant speeds. At 70 mph it gets 16.2 mpg and at 55 mph it gets 18.6 mpg.

The difference is 2.4 mpg or a 14.8 percent increase in fuel economy. It should be noted that is the maximum increase that could be expected. Factors such as some smaller cars in the overall driving population and actual variable-speed driving conditions would significantly reduce this percent of improvement. Since we don't have data to support these factors, we will use the 14.8 figure for further analysis.

All the cars in the country do not run at highway speeds because they are frequently operated in urban areas. The U.S. Department of Commerce estimates that 45 percent of the mileage accumulated by passenger cars is on rural roads which are affected by a 55 mph limit. This means that the 14.8 percent savings in gasoline must be factored by 45 percent for an actual savings potential of 6.7 percent. This savings must be factored again by the mileage driven in those states that had speed limits lower than 70 mph before the Federal law was passed.

# THE NATIONAL SPEED LIMIT

FUEL ECONOMY VS. CONSTANT SPEED

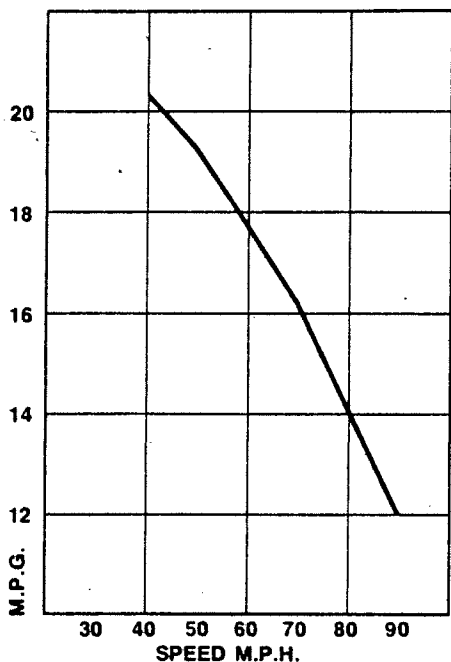


FIGURE #1

Figure #2 shows the state-by-state breakdown of old speed limits and population. A weighted average of the population of each state plus an average of the state-imposed speed limits shows that 63 mph is representative of the average speed a driver was traveling in rural areas before the federal 55 mph limit was imposed. When this data is factored into our 6.7 percent potential savings, the maximum savings is consequently reduced to 3.1 percent.

This calculation does *not* consider that some drivers always exceed the speed limit or that some drivers never go as fast as the limit allows.

It does not take into account driving factors such as acceleration, hill climbing and traffic patterns that would all reduce the potential savings. For comparison purposes it is safe to say that the three percent savings in fuel we calculated is the maximum that might be expected as a result of the federal 55 mph speed limit. Considering actual driving conditions in all parts of the country, the minimum potential gasoline savings could be as little as one percent. A three percent fuel savings is significant but not really very much in light of the enormity of the problem.

Can a better way to save gasoline and the time-saving 70 mph speed limit go together? Ideally, a fuel conservation program should affect all people equally and save maximum amounts of fuel. If we could reduce the weight of the average car by 1000 pounds we

SPEED LIMITS AND POPULATION

STATE	DAY	NIGHT	INTERSTATE	POPULATION (1,000s)
ALABAMA	60	50	70	3,451
ALASKA	60	—	70	305
ARIZONA	60	60	—	1,792
ARKANSAS	60	—	75	1,926
CALIFORNIA	65	—	65	19,994
COLORADO	70	—	70	2,225
CONNECTICUT	RP	—	—	3,039
DELAWARE	50	—	60	550
WASHINGTON D.C.	45	—	50	753
FLORIDA	65	70	—	6,845
GEORGIA	60	50	70	4,602
HAWAII	45	—	65	774
IDAHO	60	55	70	717
ILLINOIS	65	—	70	11,137
INDIANA	65	—	70	5,208
IOWA	70	60	75	2,830
KANSAS	70	60	75	2,248
KENTUCKY	60	50	70	3,224
LOUISIANA	60	—	70	3,644
MAINE	45	—	70	995
MARYLAND	50	—	70	3,937
MASSACHUSETTS	40	—	65	5,699
MICHIGAN	65	55	70	8,901
MINNESOTA	65	55	70	3,822
MISSISSIPPI	65	—	70	2,216
MISSOURI	65	60	70	4,693
MONTANA	65	55	—	697
NEBRASKA	65	60	75	1,490
NEVADA	No limit except as posted in cities.			493
NEW HAMPSHIRE	60	—	70	742
NEW JERSEY	50	—	60	7,195
NEW MEXICO	70	70	70	1,018
NEW YORK	55	—	65	18,260
NORTH CAROLINA	55	—	70	5,091
NORTH DAKOTA	60	65	75	618
OHIO	60	50	70	10,688
OKLAHOMA	65	55	70	2,572
OREGON	55	—	70	2,102
PENNSYLVANIA	55	—	70	11,817
RHODE ISLAND	55	45	60	951
SOUTH CAROLINA	60	50	70	2,596
SOUTH DAKOTA	70	60	75	666
TENNESSEE	65	55	75	3,932
TEXAS	70	65	70	11,254
UTAH	60	50	70	1,069
VERMONT	50	—	65	447
VIRGINIA	55	—	70	4,653
WASHINGTON	60	—	70	3,414
WEST VIRGINIA	50	—	70	1,746
WISCONSIN	65	55	70	4,433
WYOMING	65	—	75	334

FIGURE #2

would realize a fuel savings far greater than would ever be possible with reduce speed limits.

The weight of your car has a greater effect on fuel economy than any other design factor. Analysis of comprehensive data shows that the *overall* fuel economy is approximately equal to a constant.

$$\text{MPG} = \frac{56,000}{\text{Weight}}$$

56,000 divided by total vehicle weight.

Figure #3 shows this relationship for a group of cars with varying weights and fuel economies. This data indicates fuel economy that is realized in overall driving conditions such as you might encounter in putting 25,000 miles on your car over a two year period. As is shown by the data it is accurate within two mpg. This variation allows for different driving habits, car-to-car variations, engine tune and all the other variables that affect fuel econo-

### OVERALL FUEL ECONOMY VS. TOTAL VEHICLE WEIGHT

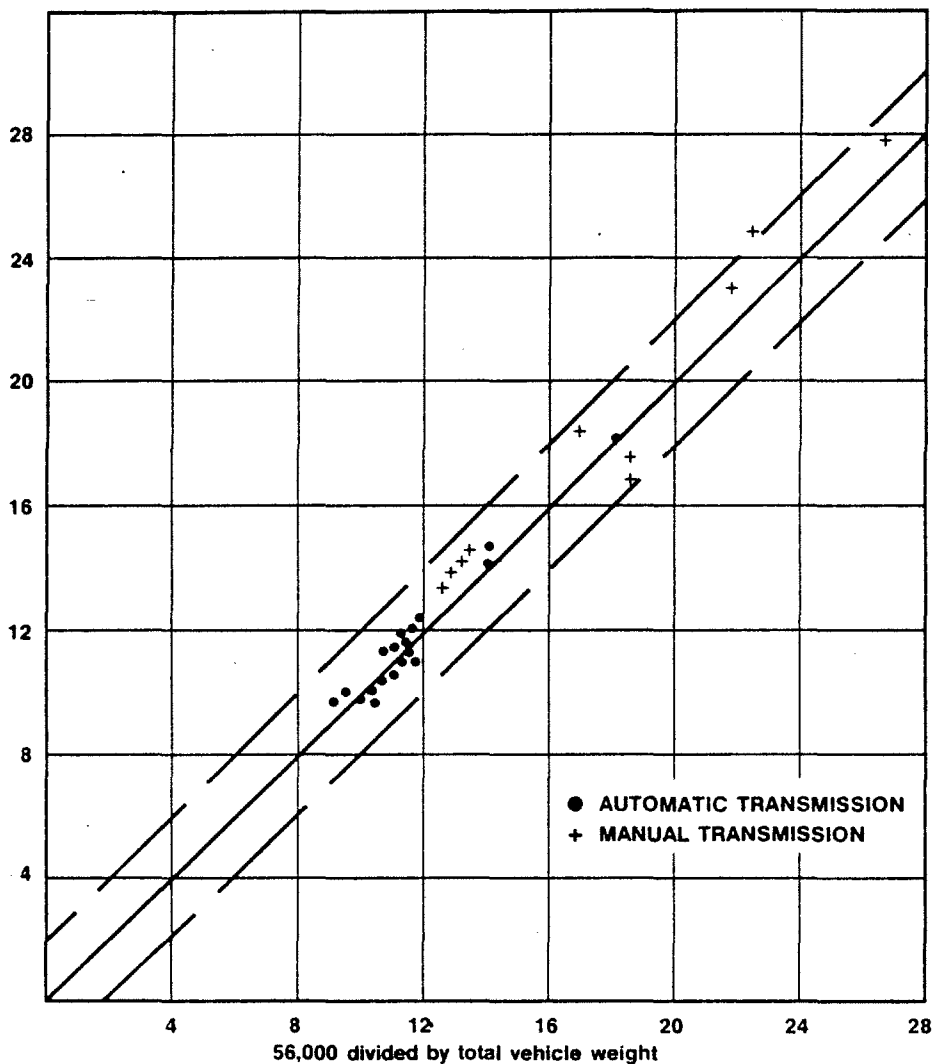


FIGURE #3

my. Our purpose in presenting this data is to show the relationship between fuel economy and total vehicle weight. In this case the total vehicle weight includes passengers, cargo and anything else that moves with the car. Reduced weight results in fuel savings because less energy is required to move less weight. Using the chart for an example we see that a 4000 pound car will get approximately 14 mpg average under all driving conditions. We also see that a 3000 pound car will get 18.6 mpg under the same conditions. This increase of 4.6 mpg equals a 32 percent saving in fuel. If we could reduce the weight of the average car on our roads from 4000 to 3000 pounds, we would realize a fuel savings ten times as great as might be realized with the 55 mph speed limit. The reason reduced weight can save so much fuel is because every car will save all the time, not like with a reduced speed

limit where only a select few will save on select occasions.

Foreign manufacturers (and Detroit, to a much lesser degree) have shown us that it is possible to build smaller, lighter cars that are still safe, attractive and, if desired, luxurious. The use of smaller and lighter cars has the advantage of other savings besides that of gasoline. For one thing, fuel costs to customers will be reduced because they will use less gasoline. More importantly, the widespread use of smaller and lighter cars will result in raw material savings as well as a savings in the energy required to process these raw materials.

Automotive manufacturers will build any type of car that sells because their business is to make money. During last year's gasoline shortage the sale of small cars boomed. But, as soon as gas was available again, even at higher prices, people returned to buying big

cars. It is easy to see why Detroit has not forsaken large cars. What we need then, is an incentive to make people want to own and drive smaller, lighter automobiles.

The obvious incentive to buyers in the middle of a recession is monetary. If the government levied an excessive tax on the weight of cars—proportionally increasing with the weight of the vehicle—it would be possible to influence the weight of cars on the road and realize a savings in fuel usage. Since we would like to make it attractive for people to own and drive lighter cars, the formula for applying the excise tax should favor lighter weight vehicles. This can be done by making the excise tax a cubic function of car weight. An example of how this would work would be:

$$\text{TAX} = 3 \left( \frac{\text{Weight of Car}}{1000} \right)^3$$

WEIGHT	TAX
1000-pound car	\$ 3 per year
2000-pound car	\$ 24 per year
3000-pound car	\$ 81 per year
4000-pound car	\$ 192 per year
5000-pound car	\$475 per year
6000-pound car	\$594 per year

To simplify paper work in collecting taxes and as a further incentive to owning a lightweight car, all taxes of \$100 or less could be waived. This would mean that a car weighing less than 3000 pounds would pay no tax yet a 6000-pound car would pay almost \$600 per year in excise tax. Over the ten year life of a car, the excise tax of a heavy car could approach its initial cost. This system would permit the status seekers and wealthy to still own their large cars, but in the process they would be paying for the privilege. The majority of the public would be conscious of the cost savings advantages of lighter cars, buy them, and drive them for an overall savings in total gasoline used.

The above tax formula is presented only as an example. The constant and power of the formula can be changed to meet any tax rates that might be desired.

Since the change to light cars is one that must be made slowly, we propose for the full program to be exercised over a five-year period. This would allow for the normal death of existing cars while encouraging the manufacturers and the public to work toward the use of lighter cars. If the program were enforced 20 percent per year we would have a progressive approach to realizing the overall objective. The total

# THE NATIONAL SPEED LIMIT

results would not be immediate but each year the fuel savings would increase and the tax dollars to the government would multiply.

To get some idea of how much tax money the government would realize, assume an average car weight of 4000 pounds. The first year, 20 percent of the total would be about \$40 per car. 108 million cars x \$40 each is over four billion dollars. The second year this would grow to over eight billion dollars until the fifth year when it would exceed 20 billion dollars per year. Naturally, by this time more people would be using smaller cars to save the tax. This would reduce the amount of money that the government

would collect in excise tax but it would also result in a considerable savings in gasoline and that is the real objective.

We have attempted here to show how much gasoline the 55 mph speed limit really saves. We have also tried to show that reducing the weight of cars is a much more effective means of saving gasoline. We hope that the government recognizes the effectiveness of this gas savings program and uses this—and all available—information in formulating our country's long range energy policies. But we doubt this will be the case: Remember that the federal government has religiously adhered to a knee-jerk, get-in-the-swim-regardless attitude about your car and mine

that has resulted in some of the most laughable and ineffective laws on the books. And now that President Ford has proposed a five-year moratorium on emissions standards—against the advice of such prestigious organizations as the National Academy of Sciences—it is a pretty good indication that your government will continue to allow depressed big business all the leeway it can take, never you mind that implicit hardships of such policies will be forced onto an over-burdened public.

Yes, indeed, friend, you and I will continue to pay the biggest part of the tab to undo what has already been done. And that is the biggest rip-off of all. Such are the politics of desperation. ■

## GAS PRICES-- UP, UP AND AWAY!

**T**he story going around was that gasoline prices would not go above 99 cents a gallon because there were only two-digit counters on the pumps. Grasping at this particular straw would be unwise since the mechanical obstacle of gas pump counters could easily be overcome, but the story is an example of how unreasoning any speculation on future gasoline prices may be.

It's doubtful that prices will approach a dollar per gallon, at least not in the very near future. The only thing that is certain is that they will go up, and soon. It will happen as soon as Congress and the President strike whatever compromise they will be forced into.

At this point the only thing they agree on is the often mentioned goal of cutting oil imports one million barrels a day by the end of 1975. We are currently importing oil at the rate of seven million barrels a day, 37.4 percent of our total consumption. So, to cut imports by a million barrels, we would have to cut our consumption by around five percent. For a person who drives 10,000 miles a year this would mean a 500-mile reduction, if the cut were to be spread evenly. This is the equivalent of a round trip from New York to Washington, D.C.

The problem is that the public has not shown any inclination to-

wards voluntarily reducing its driving and the government is trying to figure out ways to force it.

The President says that by raising the tariff on imported oil and the tax on domestic oil, the price increase at the pump—which will put gasoline in the 70-cent bracket—will deter people from driving and thus accomplish the goal of reducing our dependency on the Organization of Oil Exporting Countries, OPEC.

A tax cut will give the consumer back the extra money he spent on gasoline because of the tariff. The thinking is that a stiff price on the pump will act as a deterrent to casual consumption, even though the money gets returned.

This, the Democratic majority in Congress argues—including such powerful figures as Senator Jackson—is nonsense. What high pump prices will really do, they claim, is to make life more miserable for the person down on the economic scale without having much impact on the rich. It is, in short, unfair.

Their answer is rationing. Either through coupons, gas station closing on Sundays, odd-even rationing or some combination of these, we can cut consumption. Prices will not increase much with this system and everyone will suffer equally.

The President says he will veto

rationing, but acts like he will compromise. Whatever that works out to be remains unclear, but President Ford said that if a compromise is not possible he may simply put a quota on imported oil and accomplish the goal of reducing our dependency that way. He is using this threat as lever on the assumption that nobody wants a drastic action like this. But, if you think about it for a minute, it may not be such a bad idea after all. Simply import one million barrels less a day and let supply and demand take care of itself. At first there would probably be disruptions as the system adjusted itself to such a shortage, but, one suspects that before long it would work itself out. Naturally, if the laws of supply and demand mean anything, there would be a price increase. But that would help to discourage demand and loosen up supply.

But this doesn't seem likely. What probably will happen is some form of rationing—not with coupons, everybody hates those—and some kind of tariff. The price of gasoline will probably stabilize somewhere between 60 and 70 cents a gallon. If, as promised, the auto manufacturers improve mileage significantly, the new cars of the future should be able to mitigate fuel price increases by being more efficient. ■

*article* **By BROCK YATES**

AT THE RISK of corrupting American youth and kicking away yet another foundation stone of the Republic, I am here to confess an act of overt civil disobedience: I am a speeder. On the open highways of America, I haul ass. I pay about as much attention to the Government's cockamamie 55-mph speed limit as I do to the Treaty of Versailles, and, what's more, by observing a few rules of my own, I get away with it—most of the time.

Yeah, yeah, I know—speed kills, right? Safety freaks have been yapping about that for years and, wringing their hands with concern, they tell us that lower limits and tougher law enforcement will cut the death rate on the highways. A simple solution but patent bullshit. The fact of the matter is that pure speed on clear, uncongested roads has very little to do with fatal accidents. It's the other ingredients such as alcohol (50 percent of all serious crashes involve booze), drugs, mental disturbances, physical disabilities, suicidal instincts (some experts speculate that as many as 15 percent of all fatal accidents are *(continued on page 124)*

## 55 BE DAMNED!

*(continued from page 103)*

suicides, for example), junk cars, poor weather, etc., that combine with speed to cause problems. But there is no statistical support whatsoever that a healthy, reasonably intelligent person with good eyesight and quick reflexes, driving a quick, agile car with top-quality radial tires, excellent brakes, steering, suspension, etc., is contributing to the highway carnage. Convince me otherwise and I'll back off, but until then, I'll operate in good-natured protest against a speed-enforcement system that I believe is shot through with inefficiency and hypocrisy—and keep my eyes open and my foot down.

Using a driving technique that was developed in Europe (where, until the OPEC embargo, most countries had no superhighway speed limits at all—an environment that quite logically produced incredibly safe and roadworthy cars such as the Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Porsche, Alfa Romeo, Ferrari) in the United States was hard enough before the national 55-mph speed limit, but now it takes some real concentration.

But wait a minute, you protest, didn't our saviors in Washington institute the 55-mph limit for two reasons—to save lives and to conserve fuel? Of course they did; the simple fact that it does neither has had no impact on their thinking. Consider these realities: As the economy improves, the accident rate seems headed for pre-fuel-crunch levels, proving what antiestablishment traffic experts maintained all along: Altered driving habits, *not* reduced speeds, temporarily reduced accidents in 1974. Does 55 mph cut fuel consumption? Obviously, the slower the cruising speed, the better the gas mileage, except for trucks, which for the most part must operate in a lower gear, which means higher engine revs and more fuel burned. And then we have really efficient small cars with lightweight, slippery body shapes that get better mileage at 80 mph than some monster sedans get at 40 mph. Add to that the general loss of efficiency in terms of time wasted and you can empathize with the guy who said, "Driving across Texas at 55 mph isn't a trip, it's a goddamn career!"

All well and good, you say, but isn't trying to drive fast in the United States tantamount to robbing a bank armed with a rusty spoon? I mean, the highways are supposed to be swarming with cops in high-powered patrol cars, poised to ticket anybody who exceeds 55 mph. Aren't the papers full of stories about the California Highway Patrol (we scofflaws call cops Chippies) convoying mobs of cars between Los Angeles and Las Vegas? Isn't the word out that Ohio has gone crazy in some kind of asphalt pogrom to enforce the new limit? All true. Yes, even great crossroads of desolation such as Wyoming and Arizona have generated

substantial—if spotty—enthusiasm for enforcement of the "55." Such states as North Carolina, Utah, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Jersey have evidenced fitful urges to get tough, but, like New York, Colorado, Indiana, Illinois, Texas and others that have quietly resisted this newest spasm of Washington-based nonsense, they lack the money, the manpower and the popular support to make 55 mph effective.

Nobody—not even your Aunt Ruth with her '63 Rambler American—is going 55 mph. Our American interstates simply will not accommodate such a sluggish pace. They were designed for utterly safe speeds in the 70-mph range and lesser velocities are simply dumb. When one recalls that 85 percent of all traffic in a given situation operates at a reasonable speed, regardless of the posted limit, the news that average interstate traffic is loping along at about 65 mph is hardly a revelation.

But that is still not quick enough. My particular preference is a cruising speed in the 75–80-mph range on open interstates, but it's a pace at which you can get your ass handed to you practically anyplace in the Union. Therefore, a little serious preparation is necessary if you plan to run that quickly and (1) keep your license for more than a week at a time, (2) stay out of jail and (3) not go broke paying fines. Actually, a fair amount of field research exists on the subject of subverting the highway heat. There is this underground coast-to-coast race called the Cannonball Baker Sea-to-Shining-Sea Memorial Trophy Dash that has produced incredible amounts of information on the subject. Started in 1971 by a semiweird journalist, car freak and general troublemaker named Brock Yates, the Cannonball has been run four times from midtown Manhattan to the Portofino Inn on the Pacific Ocean at Redondo Beach, California, south of L.A. The present record, including New York and L.A. traffic, plus all stops, is 35 hours and 53 minutes (set in 1975 by two Floridians driving a Ferrari Dino), which works out to an average speed of 82 mph. Can you run fast in the United States? The '75 Cannonball had 18 entrants, all of whom finished the run at an over-all average speed of 70.7 mph and got fewer than a dozen tickets and warnings in the process. Dangerous? Not hardly what the safety establishment tells you: The four Cannonball runs have involved 61 vehicles—ranging from 175-mph Ferraris to motor homes and pickups—and 149 individual drivers. Driving on the interstates at speeds seldom less than 75 mph and often over 100 mph, these people (myself included) have recorded over 160,000 miles with one minor accident. Yes, good drivers and good cars can run quickly and safely on the open roads. Here are

some of the things we learned along the way:

**Know thine enemy:** Generally speaking, the interstate system is in the jurisdiction of the highway patrols of the individual states. They have different operating procedures and use different brands and colors of cars, etc. California, for example, uses black-and-white Dodges, often without a light or "gum-ball machine" on the roof, which makes them hard to spot in freeway traffic. California uses very little radar or VASCAR, which means the patrols catch people by sitting on the freeways on ramps or making high-speed "sweeps" through traffic, picking up anyone they have trouble overtaking. Many other states use unmarked patrol cars (although they are generally identifiable to the sharp-eyed for the following reasons: 1. They are usually full-size, solid-color, striped versions of the regular Ford, Chevrolet or Dodge patrol cars used by the particular state in question. 2. Somewhere on the car is a tiny VHF whip antenna and, in many cases, a spotlight on the driver's-side windshield pillar. 3. Specially built police specials usually sit lower on their suspensions and use slightly wider tires than normal cars. 4. They will usually carry official state license plates). This unmarked-car business can be frustrating; many is the time I've warily trailed a slow-moving Dodge or Ford that fits the description, only to discover that the driver is a member of the Office of Weights and Measures or some such thing. Moreover, some states are getting really sneaky—New Jersey is using vans equipped with radar parked on its overpasses and Arizona and Maryland, among others, have been known to let their troopers use what appear to be private cars and even old pickups. However, disguises can work both ways. The 1972 Cannonball featured a trio of sports-car racers who ran their Mercedes-Benz cross-country while decked out as Roman Catholic priests. After being arrested in Arizona for driving 95 mph, one of the impersonators suggested to the patrolman that he might reduce the speed on the ticket to a more saintly—and less expensive—velocity. The officer, vaguely suspicious, countered, "Yes, Father, we could reduce the speed, but that would be lying, wouldn't it?" Until you're sure, be suspicious of any vehicle on the road; it's that simple. Memorize the brands and colors of patrol cars in the areas where you drive.

Highway patrols use three basic methods to trap speeders: radar—a version of the military device that measures speed via microwave signals; VASCAR—a simple time-distance computer, operated by the officer from his car, that emits no beams or signals whatsoever; and the aged but basically foolproof method of clocking relative speeds by speedometer. In theory,

*(continued on page 231)*

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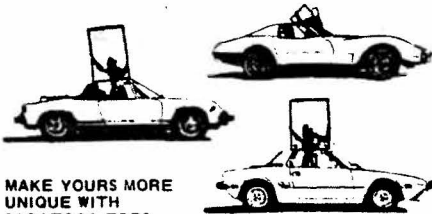
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**55 BE DAMNED!**

(continued from page 124)

VASCAR is the neatest, cleanest method of the three. It can be used in motion or at rest and can time cars running in the same direction or approaching the patrol car. But police officers complain about its accuracy, its reliability and the fact that it is more cumbersome to use than radar. Therefore, radar becomes a greater factor in speed control with each passing day. The old window-mounted units that had a range of about 1500 feet and could be operated only when stationary have been replaced by the incredible Kustom Signals, Inc., MR-7, which has a range of about a mile and can be operated at rest or in motion, or even hand held away from an automobile! This is decidedly the unit of the future and the one speeding scoundrels must treat with the greatest caution (although there are countermeasures—read on). Radar can be, and is, used in all situations: from bridges, behind hills and around curves, aimed at traffic approaching from either direction, or from a low-flying airplane (known as a Bear in the air or a spy in the sky in C.B. radio parlance). Yes, these "picture-taking machines," as the truckers call radar, are the heart and soul of speed-law enforcement, especially on open stretches of interstates (radar does not work particularly well on heavily congested highways, because it cannot easily discern one car from another) and, thanks to their cost, mobility and relative ease of operation, it appears they will remain as such for years to come.

*Smokeys, Smokeys, in the trees,  
They've got radar,  
But we've got C.B.s.*

Embodied within that cornball couplet is the secret to fast driving in the U. S. Citizen's-band radios came into really widespread use following the great truckers' strikes of 1973, when the Government first tried to make the big rigs operate at 55 mph. Because these brutes eat more fuel and consume more time (which is money to a driver) at 55, the truckers created an early-warning system via citizen's-band radios (channel 19 across the country and channel 21 in some parts of the West). With it came a beautiful new slang revolving around the world of 18-wheelers (trucks), four-wheelers (cars), etc., that operates from coast to coast. A C.B. radio is indispensable. It's that simple. Using it as an alarm system is great, but it has an added benefit of getting you involved in the highway milieu—of removing you and your associates on the road from those hundreds of little steel capsules and creating a kind of loose camaraderie that fights boredom and fatigue better than all the stereo systems known to man. Since I've put my C.B. on board, I've given up on my tape deck. The next

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time some turkey rips it off, I won't bother to replace it.

A couple of words of warning: Pass the truckers with care. Run by some of them too quickly and they'll begin to yell over the radio about your speed. More and more cops (called Smokeys, Smokey Bears or Bears) are carrying C.B.s in their cars, and before you know it, you may have one on your tail. Also beware of a friendly voice saying something like "It's clear to mile marker 28, come on, come on!" That could be a Smokey (sometimes known as a Sugar Bear) trying to lure the unwary into his radar beam (which is, of course, entrapment, but, then, life ain't easy out there on the interstates, good buddy).

*Hit the brakes when you hear the beep:* OK, so you've got your C.B. (or two-way, as it is called) tuned up to full volume for incoming Smokey reports, but you still need more warning, which comes in the form of a small black container about the size of a Coney Island hot dog mounted on your dashboard or windshield. When it was introduced, the Snooper, made by Autotronics, Inc., of Richardson, Texas, was the best radar detector on the market. This unit, which sells for \$79.95 (higher in some states), has an effective range of about 5000 feet and will sound an ear-piercing beep as soon as it senses a radar signal. In reaction to the new MR-7 radar, Autotronics now has the Super Snooper, which offers a substantial increase in range and receives both the X-band and the new K-band frequencies used by the latest models of police radar. These devices, like C.B.s, have no substitutes. (Forget that nonsense about putting aluminum foil in your hubcaps to jam the radar—it's useless, although there's a Texan known as the Lubbock Kid who's got his Camaro rigged up with a working police-radar jammer fabricated from the guts of a Sears microwave oven. The guys at Autotronics say a jammer is definitely within the range of their technology but are wary of its legality. However, if you were to have one built by your buddy, the electronics freak. . . .) Not all radar detectors are useful. The small battery-operated units that clip to the sun visor lack the range and sensitivity of more expensive versions and can sometimes create a false sense of security. One motorist roared through a New York State Police radar trap without his detector's making a peep. Irritated after receiving his ticket, he turned around and passed through the trap again, this time at a legal speed. Again the detector failed, which prompted him to stop his car, get out and stomp the device into small pieces.

*Treat driving as an art:* Being an effective fast driver demands pride both in your personal skills and in your automobile. If you don't care about cars and the science of controlling them, you are stupid to attempt to drive them quickly. Because similar but less intense vehicle

and driver dynamics relate fast road driving with motor racing, I recommend a pair of books: *The Racing Driver: The Theory and Practice of Fast Driving*, by Denis Jenkinson, and *The Technique of Motor Racing*, by Piero Taruffi (both available from Robert Bentley, Inc., 872 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139). When you understand what these experts are talking about and your automobile is in perfect mechanical condition, you can run quickly with minimal risk.

Moreover, make sure you are well fitted to your environment; namely, that you are comfortable while at the controls. For example: Your seat should be far enough away from the steering wheel so that your wrist will touch the top of the rim when your arm is outstretched. Actual driving should be done with *both* hands, located slightly below the traditional ten-to-two position. The grip should be light, the elbows relaxed. Loose clothing is a must, both to enhance mobility and to reduce fatigue. Turtlenecks or tight collars are practically guaranteed to produce sore necks and stiff back muscles. Top-quality sunglasses are invaluable. Many fast drivers insist on small-diameter, leather- or rubber-rimmed steering wheels, which increase control and absorb perspiration, thereby making them easier to grip. A variety of custom steering wheels as well as quartz-halogen driving lights (highly recommended) are available from a multitude of automotive-specialty shops. If you are not happy with the comfort and stability provided by the seat in your car, high-quality, race- and rally-type seats—some fully adjustable—can also be purchased for from \$100 to \$300.

*Think!* Anyone who thinks of fast road driving as the simple act of cranking the throttle to the wood and hanging on belongs in jail—which is exactly where he is going to end up. The automobile must be driven cautiously at high speeds, because closing rates on dangerous situations and law officers are greater. This means that hill crests, blind bends, etc., must be approached with speed reduced and the driver prepared to hit the brakes, ready for anything. *Concentration* is the key and if you are dull and inattentive enough to drive blindly into a radar trap, you deserve everything you get.

*When you get nailed:* All the C.B.s and the Snoopers in the world won't prevent the inevitable. If you drive a lot, sooner or later you are going to get stopped for speeding. When (not if) that happens, follow these few rules to ease the pain: 1. Immediately pull over, with your four-way flashers turned on. *Never, never be a dumb-ass and try to outrun a Smokey.* Not only is it unforgivably dangerous but the odds of success are minimal. 2. Get out of your car and walk to the patrol car with your license and registration in hand. This is effective for two reasons, one practical, one psychological:

Highway-patrol officers generally work alone, and that is a dangerous business. They are extremely vulnerable when approaching a stopped vehicle, which they do with reluctance. What's more, if you are conversant with Robert Ardrey's *Territorial Imperative*, you will know that the officer's largess will be increased tenfold when you submissively go to him on his turf. 3. Don't make an ass out of yourself by arguing or flashing that police courtesy card your uncle, the alderman, gave you. Highway patrolmen are, for the most part, highly trained, intelligent men who have heard every whacko story, excuse and tale of influence conceivable. They are professionals who are doing a difficult job (and many of them despise the 55-mph limit as much as anybody) and, if they nail you, they probably have you dead to rights and you're only wasting their time and yours by arguing or protesting. Virtually every rationale for speeding has been tried, including the one used by the Cannonball crew who, after being nailed at 115 mph, tried to convince the officer that they were desperately low on gas and were building up sufficient speed to coast to the next service station. If you think you have been unjustly arrested, get a lawyer and go to court, but don't mess around with the Smokey. And don't, for God's sake, ever, ever try to lay a bribe on him.

*One final thought:* When I talk about fast driving, I mean *good* driving. I don't mean some slob wheeling along in his Caddy at 70 mph with the stereo turned up and his arm draped over the seat back. To drive quickly means *total involvement* and success or failure is measurable by one simple test: *It must be accomplished without the slightest inconvenience to anyone else.* If you drive fast and cause another motorist to deviate from his own course and speed, even in the most minute fashion, you have failed. Force another driver to touch his brakes, turn his steering wheel or prompt even the most hypertense incompetent on the road to honk his horn in alarm or irritation and you have bad marks as a fast driver. Not only must you not place anybody's personal safety in jeopardy but you must set such high standards for your driving that no one notices that you are on the road. This demands incredible smoothness in your driving, which can only come through complete attention to the problem.

So turn off the stereo, crank up the C.B., get both hands on the wheel and start *driving*—as opposed to slumping behind the wheel and letting the car do the job. You'll be amazed at how rewarding the whole thing can be.

*Another thing:* Play it safe—take some cash along.



## DESPITE 55 MPH LIMIT

# Highway Death Toll On Rise

SACRAMENTO (UPI) — Despite the 55 mile-an-hour speed limit, traffic deaths in California will soon reach last year's levels, Highway Patrol Chief Walter Pudinski says.

Pudinski said the chief reason for the dramatic reduction in highway fatalities during the first four months this year was because fewer cars were on the road during the "energy crisis" and motorists

were more inclined to obey the reduced speed limit.

But he said in the summer months gasoline has become more available, more motorists are on the roads, and many are driving much faster.

During the first six months of 1974 there were 1,179 deaths compared with 2,320 during the same period in 1973.

Statistics released by the CHP show 180 highway fatalities for the first two weeks of September, 20 fewer than the same period in 1973.

Pudinski, commissioner of the patrol, said in November and December the deaths on California highways should equal last year's, if current conditions prevail. There were 390 fatalities in

November, 1973 and 332 in December.

Pudinski said officials of national safety organizations have been plugging the lower speed limit as a "cure-all" for highway fatalities.

"Now that the facts are coming in, I see a big change of heart in their statements," said Pudinski. "They are all beginning not only to agree

with me, but they are echoing what we are saying."

Speeding tickets issued by the patrol have nearly tripled in the last year. Officials have complained that there were not enough officers available to arrest all the lawbreakers.

Pudinski emphasized he was not against the 55 mile-per-hour speed limit. He said the lower speed limit is responsible for saving lives and "anything that saves lives should be retained in some form."

"I think the facts are beginning to show that the speed limit should be determined on the basis of engineering studies. We should determine exactly where we are saving lives by a 55 mile-per-hour speed limit," he said.

"Then," he said, "we should retain the speed limit where we know we are getting the highest life saving payoff."

He said engineers should take a close look at areas in California that have good terrain and are not congested.

"In those areas we should determine the speed on the basis of where we are going to get the most life saving," he said.

## Alcohol Often Fatal Factor

CARSON CITY (UPI) — Two out of every three fatal traffic accidents involved persons who had been drinking during the first six months of this year, the Nevada Office of Traffic Safety reported Tuesday.

John Borda, chief of traffic safety, said statistics show that 45 per cent of the fatal crashes involved persons whose blood alcohol content was over the legal limit. In 1974 alcohol levels over the limit were factors in 39 per cent of all fatal crashes for the six month period.

The legal blood alcohol limit in Nevada is .10 and Borda said studies show that with a level of .15 the average driver is 25 times more likely to have an accident than if he were sober.

## Alcohol-auto deaths slip by public

ALBANY, N.Y. (UPI) — A state task force report released today said nearly as many persons are killed in alcohol-related traffic accidents as are murdered, yet the public remains apathetic to the problem.

The report, the result of a 2½ year study by the state task force on alcohol problems, noted that public intoxication would be "decriminalized" after Jan. 1, but said that additional funding was necessary to set up a network of "sobering up stations" statewide.

The task force, created in 1972 by former state mental hygiene commissioner Alan D. Miller, did not estimate how much additional money would be needed.

The task force, headed by Gordon E. Brown, executive director of the state communities aid association, estimated that half of the 2,663 traffic fatalities which occurred last year involved drivers or pedestrians who had been drinking.

In contrast, in 1973, there were 2,034 persons murdered in the state, with 1,680 in New York City.

"One act is as horrifying, violent, and senseless as the other," the report said. "Yet with murder, people demonstrate concern for increased public safety provisions while with alcohol-related highway deaths, apathy prevails."

## Traffic fatalities, miles begin to climb again

CHICAGO (AP) — Traffic fatalities, which declined 17 per cent in 1974, are climbing again as many Americans return to driving patterns to which they were accustomed before last year's gasoline shortages.

The latest National Safety Council statistics for the first two months of this year show a 6 per cent rise from the same two months in 1974. January marked the first monthly increase from the previous year since October 1973.

There was a dramatic decline in the fatality rate in the early months of 1974 during the gasoline crunch as motorists drove less frequently and slower.

From January to May 1974, traffic fatalities were down 25 per cent from record 1973 levels, and the National Safety Council expected some slippage this year.

"There was a tremendous reduction in miles driven last spring," Ron Kuykendall, a council spokesman, said Monday. "Now, mileage is back to normal, a little bit above 1973 levels.

"We also don't have the national trauma we had last spring when we had to wait in long lines

for gasoline and service stations were closed on weekends. Then, too, there is not as much emphasis on reducing driving and on reducing speed."

Initial projections of the council predicted that the 1975 traffic fatality toll would be a little higher than the 46,200 persons who were killed in 1974. With the most recent statistics, however, Kuykendall said early projection may have to be pushed upward.

If the current increase continues at 6 per cent, about 49,000 persons would be killed in highway accidents this year. In comparison, highway deaths in 1973 totalled 55,800 fatalities.

Kuykendall said he expects the fatality rate to increase at a faster rate in the coming months. But he said if the use of safety harnesses remains at its current level, the monthly fatality rate around mid-summer should be about the same as last year.

That was about the time when motorists began reverting to their old driving habits — using the car more often and paying less heed to the 44 mile-per-hour speed limit, he said.

# Fuel shortage helped lower highway fatalities

CARSON CITY (UPI) — The nation's highway deaths declined by 10,000 persons last year due mainly to the fuel shortage and the 55-mile per hour speed limit, a federal safety official said Tuesday.

James B. Gregory, administrator of the National Traffic Safety Administration said, however, motorists were now driving at speeds exceeding 60 miles per hour in recent months.

"People haven't believed the need to conserve and we have seen speeds creeping up. They were averaging below 60 but are over 60 miles per

hour," Gregory met with Gov. Mike O'Callaghan to discuss future highway safety programs. He said he found the governor enthusiastic about supporting these programs.

There have been reports that state highway patrols and local police officials are not strictly enforcing the 55 mile speed limit. But he said most drivers have reduced their speed 9-10 miles per hour.

Gregory said 1974 figures will show a death toll of about 46,000 or about 20 per cent lower than 1973. He said he hoped that could be reduced another 3,000 persons this year.

Gregory said the biggest single thing now to reduce highway fatalities further "is to get the

drunk and drinking driver off the highway."

He said alcohol was involved in 50 per cent of traffic deaths. What is disturbing, he said, was that a recent study showed half of the nation's high school students are involved in alcohol in some way.

## *Energy problem helps keep death toll down*

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Thanks in part to the energy problem, traffic deaths on the nation's roads and highways decreased by 9,550 last year, the government reported today.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, in an annual report to the President and Congress, said 45,534 persons died in traffic accidents during 1974. That figure was down 18 per cent from 55,084 deaths the previous year.

The report said the lowering of speed limits, less driving and change in driver habits — all related to the energy crisis — had a dramatic impact on traffic deaths in the United States.

It also credited safety devices installed in autos since 1968, better drivers and roads and improved highway safety programs.

The agency said persons under 25 years of age were involved in 35 per cent of all fatal accidents, and alcohol remained "the No. 1 killer on the highways."

*Exhibit "D"*

### INFORMATION ON VEHICLE SPEED

The following information concerning speed was released by a representative of the California Highway Patrol.

1. Out of all accidents occurring at 55 m.p.h.  
2.3% result in fatalities, and 34% in injuries.
2. At 65 m.p.h., 3.5% of all crashes result in  
fatalities and 37.5% in injuries.
3. Above 75 m.p.h., 11.4% of all crashes result  
in fatalities.

*Exhibit "E"*

THE ATTACHED INFORMATION PERTAINING TO THE 55 MPH SPEED LIMIT  
HAS BEEN PROVIDED TO YOU BY  
THE NEVADA OFFICE OF TRAFFIC SAFETY

INFORMATION PERTAINING TO

55 MPH SPEED LIMIT

The 55 mph speed limit has been the most effective traffic safety counter-measure which has been introduced in Nevada up until this time. We had 51 fewer traffic fatalities in 1974 (the year the law went into effect), than the previous year, and we have been able to closely maintain that reduction through 1976. Fatalities, vehicle miles driven, 85th percentile speed, and mileage death rate for the year 1973 through 1976 are listed below:

	<u>Fatalities</u>	<u>Vehicle Miles</u>	<u>85th Percentile Speed</u>	<u>Milage Death Rate</u>
1973	267	4,281,000,000	79 mph	6.24
1974	216	4,195,000,000	67 mph	5.15
1975	221	4,439,000,000	63 mph	4.98
1976	223*	4,714,000,000	64 mph	4.73*

\* Figures for 1976 are projected based upon information through January 20, 1977

To help support the 55 mph speed limit, the Office of Traffic Safety has purchased radars for enforcement agencies, funded several Selective Traffic Enforcement Programs throughout the State, and conducted an extensive statewide PI & E campaign designed to convince the public of the obvious safety benefits of the 55. The PI & E campaign is a continuing effort of the Office of Traffic Safety.

Western States Fatality Comparison  
1973 - 1976

	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976*</u>	<u>Percent Reduction 1973 - 1976</u>
Idaho	349	327	283	280	-20%
Utah	361	229	275	254	-30%
Arizona	967	748	676	720	-26%
California	4,905	4,019	4,189	4,402	-10%
Oregon	636	672	574	634	----
Washington	776	761	771	819	+ 6%
Nevada	267	216	221	223	-17%
	<u>8,261</u>			<u>7,332</u>	-11%

\* Figures for 1976 are provisional - died later must be counted for 12 months

The following represents an analysis of five states that do not impose demerits or a penalty other than a fine for driving in excess of 55 mph, but less than a higher designated speed indicated. The five states are Idaho, Oklahoma, Montana, Nebraska and Wyoming.

	<u>1973 Fatalities</u>	<u>1976 Fatalities</u>	
Idaho	349	280	-20%
Oklahoma	797	838	+ 5%
Montana	323	300	- 7%
Nebraska	433	401	- 7%
Wyoming	192	260	+35%

Traffic fatalities for the above five states combined are down less than one percent (1%) (from ~~2,049~~ to 2,079) from 1973 to 1976.  
2,094

Traffic fatalities in Nevada are down seventeen percent (17%) (from 267 to 223) from 1973 to 1976.

Nationally, fatalities are down seventeen percent (17%) from 1973 to 1976.

#### FUEL SAVINGS AND THE 55\*

1. Tests have shown that reduction in the traveling speed of 10 mph, specifically from 65 to 55 mph, would reduce the consumption of fuel by approximately 13%.
2. FHWA estimates that 20-25% of the travel in the U.S. is in this speed range.
3. From 1973 to 1974, there was a 2.6% reduction in travel. For the same period, there was a 3.7% reduction in gasoline consumption. The difference, 1.1% is attributed to the speed limit. This represents 30 million barrels of gasoline saved in one year.

\* All figures taken from: "The Effect of the Fuel Shortage on Travel and Highway Safety", NHTSA Technical Report DOT HS-801715, August 1975.



AB358  
Pat Bates, State Coordinator Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Abuse

*Alcohol & Drug Abuse*

I will only take a few minutes of the committees time, to say that the Bureau supports the intent of this legislation. However, we would like to see this change in ~~NRS 483.490~~ Section I Subsection 3(B):

After the suspension or revocation of a license upon a second or subsequent conviction within 7 years for driving under the influence of intoxicating liquor or any controlled substance, if the applicant presents satisfactory evidence that he has successfully completed a program of education and instruction in a DUI (driving under the influence) School or rehabilitation in a facility for treatment of alcohol and drug abuse and if the program and facility have been certified by the Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Abuse in the Rehabilitation Division of the Department of Human Resources.

The reason behind these changes, is that all DUI cases do not belong in Alcohol & Drug Abuse Counseling Programs but could quite possibly require education and instruction in responsible use of alcohol.

Also there is certain criteria for entry into a drug or alcohol abuse programs. We require that all our clients be physiologically or psychologically dependent. All cases of DUI would not necessarily meet this criteria.

Definition of psychologically: When a person finds that a chemical is necessary to normal functioning, but has not yet developed a physiological dependence.

RECOMMEND CHANGE -- Section 1, subsection 3(b)

*AB-358*

*Robert F*

After the suspension or revocation of a license upon a second or subsequent conviction within seven years, for driving under the influence of intoxicating liquor or any controlled substance, if the applicant presents satisfactory evidence that he has successfully completed a program of education and instruction in a driving under the influence school or rehabilitation in a facility for treatment of alcohol and drug abuse and if the program and facility have been certified by the Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Abuse in the Rehabilitation Division of the Department of Human Resources.

jld  
03/10/77

*Exhibit "D"*

483.490

3. If the department is satisfied that a severe hardship exists, the department may issue a driver's license to an applicant permitting him to drive a motor vehicle for purposes limited to his employment:

(a) After the expiration of 1 year from the date of revocation of a license and when the period of such revocation exceeds 1 year.

(b) After the [REDACTED] revocation of a license upon a second or subsequent conviction after 3 years but within 7 years for driving under the influence of intoxicating liquor or any controlled substance, if the applicant presents satisfactory evidence that subsequent to such revocation he has enrolled in and successfully completed a program of rehabilitation in a facility for treatment of alcohol and drug abuse and if the program and facility have been certified by the bureau of alcohol and drug abuse in the rehabilitation division of the department of human resources.

*re Subit "H"*

AMENDMENTS TO AB-397

The following wording should be added after the period line 12, page 2 of this bill:

All license plates and registration certificates <sup>shall</sup> ~~should~~ be turned in to the department before any credit can be allowed.

GUEST LIST

<u>NAME</u>	<u>REPRESENTING</u>	<u>WISH TO SPEAK</u>	
		Yes	No
(Please print)			
* CARL CHAPLIN	WNCC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
X Ted Fawcett	WNCC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
X Kara Chaplin	DITS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Leon L. Alexander	Self	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
X Marilyn Vasquez	WNCC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
X Lori Larson	WNCC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
X Lilli Barron	WNCC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Pat Bates	Bu of Alcohol & Drug Abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
John Aramburo	Nancy Gomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
✓ Linda Gardner	Sen. Mary Jackson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
✓ Dan Hussey	against 55 mph speed limit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Samuel J. Marber	Self	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ ART RADER	NAT'L DRIVERS ASSOCIATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Howard Hill		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Cal Lambert	N. H. P.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Grant Bastian	✓ HAWY D.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ John Bardou	✓ 9/1/70	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Bob Quinn	9/16/70	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
John Ciarelli		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mr. Goodman	Assemblyman	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leon Alexander		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Virgil Anderson	AAA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>