

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Blakemore at 3 p.m. in Room 131, Legislative Building.

SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Members Present: Senator Blakemore, Chairman  
Senator Faiss, Vice Chairman  
Senator Ashworth  
Senator Hernstadt  
Senator Jacobsen  
Senator McCorkle

Members Absent: Senator Neal

ASSEMBLY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Members Present: Chairman Sena  
Vice Chairman Glover  
Mr. FitzPatrick  
Mrs. Hayes  
Mr. Polish  
Mr. Prengaman  
Mr. Stewart  
Mrs. Wagner  
Mrs. Westall

GUESTS PRESENT

Barney Dehl, Nevada Highway Patrol  
Art Rader, National Drivers' Association  
Melvin Beauchamp, Nevada State Highway Department  
Don Crosby, Nevada Highway Department  
Joe A. Souza, Nevada Highway Department  
Barbara Rounds, Federal Highway Administration  
Al Stone, Federal Highway Administration  
Sharon Alcamo, Driver's License Division  
Dennis Tatum, Office of Traffic Safety  
Hugh Ricci  
John Borda, Office of Traffic Safety  
Ralph E. Handelman, All-Kee Association  
Virgil Anderson, American Automobile Association  
Daryl E. Capurro, Nevada Motor Transport Association  
Richard R. Garrod, Farmers Insurance Group  
Chuck King, Central Telephone

This joint session was called for the purpose of discussing seven bills, all of which related to the 55 miles per hour maximum speed limit and the demerit points system. The bills were: A.B. 220, A.B. 252, A.J.R. 12, S.B. 176, S.B. 177, S.B. 186 and S.J.R. 11. Discussion and testimony covered all bills generally.

Col. Dehl said that the Highway Patrol will endeavor to enforce whatever law is passed, but he felt dutybound to remind the committees that all evidence gathered indicates that as speed increases the death rate and fuel consumption will also increase.

Col. Dehl referred to a federal program that was performed by the Highway Patrol commencing in March 1976 and ending in March 1977. A copy of the final report covering this project is attached as Exhibit A. As a result of the concerted speed enforcement program, speeds on the highways dropped approximately 1 mile per hour, the miles per gallon increased 15 percent, the death rate was reduced by over 1 percent and each motorist saved approximately \$92.53 in fuel costs. Col. Dehl estimated that for every 1 mile increase in average speed of cars on the highway, the death rate will increase 5 to 10 people per year.

Col. Dehl was particularly concerned with the provisions of S.B. 177. He said that demerits are a means of ridding the highways of dangerous drivers since the people who get speeding tickets are also the people who are involved in traffic accidents. He felt that to eliminate the demerit system would be discriminatory since the only ones who would benefit would be the drivers who exceed the 55 miles per hour speed limit.

Mr. Art Rader, a member of the Southern Nevada Chapter of the National Drivers' Association, said this organization was formed as a consumer rights group to protect private motorists from excessive government regulation. He appeared in favor of all bills on the agenda. He presented the committee a booklet entitled "Our 55-MPH Vote Ends in a Surprise!", a copy of which is attached to the Senate Transportation Committee's minutes of February 8, 1979, as Exhibit B. Mr. Rader quoted numerous statements contained in the booklet. Senator Faiss asked if any records were available of accidents occurring on the rural highways because of tailgating. Senator Ashworth quoted from Automotive News, February 12, 1979, issue, which said, "Lower speeds will bring more vehicles together per kilometer of highway and that statistically means more collisions".

Mr. Rader said that Mr. Borda had suggested it might be possible that the Federal Transportation Department would allow Nevada to designate a certain highway for a test program for raising the speed limit to 65 miles per hour. He felt this possibility should be explored. Senator Ashworth said it was his intention to add an amendment to S.B. 186 in this regard if the bill was processed.

Mr. Melvin Beauchamp, Deputy Attorney General for the Department of Highways, stated that Section 154 of Title 23 of the U.S. Code makes it mandatory for the Secretary of Commerce to cut off all state funding if a state does not have a 55 miles per hour speed limit. Mr. Beauchamp explained a 1978 amendment to Section 154 of Title 23 which provides penalties for states that are not enforcing the speed limit.

Mrs. Westall asked that Mr. Beauchamp furnish a copy of the penalties under Public Law 95-599. Mr. Beauchamp said he would obtain this for her.

Mr. Al Stone, Federal Highway Administration, said there are two sections which apply to funds under Title 23. Section 154 allows no discretion--if the speed limit is changed, all state funds are lost. Section 141A is discretionary and requires that the Governor or his delegated representative certify once a year that the state is enforcing the 55 miles per hour speed limit. This certification is evaluated and if it is determined that enforcement is not being carried out, all funds may be cut off.

Mr. Stone further said that in order to have a test road in Nevada, national legislation in Congress would be required since there is absolutely nothing in the law that would allow test highways.

Mr. Hugh Ricci, a private citizen, opposed raising the speed limit because of the energy crisis. He said there was a tremendous energy differential between 55 and 65 miles per hour, and appealed to the committee to look to the future in this regard.

Chairman Blakemore closed the hearing and asked that Chairman Sena appoint a subcommittee to meet with a Senate Transportation subcommittee to correlate all information which has been received in regard to the bills discussed.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Dunne  
Assembly Attache

MEMORANDUM

July 15, 1977

To John W. Borda, Director

Office of Traffic Safety

From Bernard Dehl, Project Director

Subject: PROJECT NUMBER PT76-6301-3 (RESTEP): FINAL REPORT

Federal Project Number PT76-6301-3 (RESTEP) became effective March 1, 1976. This project was for the purchase of 23 RADAR units to be placed in use statewide for the enforcement of the 55 mph National Maximum Speed Limit.

The goals of the project were identical to those goals set for establishing the 55 mph speed limit as follows:

1. To Save Fuel;
2. To Save Lives; and
3. To Save Money.

Based upon available data, the project was an unqualified success.

The goals were met in the following manner:

1. Saving Fuel in Nevada:

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>Year of 1975</u>	<u>Year of 1976</u>	<u>% of Change</u>
Annual Miles Per Vehicle	8,570	9,632	+ 12.4%
Motor Fuel, Million Gallons	403	470	+ 16.6%
Miles Traveled Per Gallon	9.08	10.47	+ 15.3%

Although each vehicle traveled more, there has been an increase in the miles traveled per gallon of gasoline consumed.

2. Saving Lives in Nevada:

Since the inception of the speed limit, the number of persons killed in Nevada traffic accidents by year are as follows:

<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977 (6 months)</u>
267	216	221	224	124

During the first six months of 1977, the number of persons killed in traffic accidents in Nevada has risen by 9.7% over the same period in 1976, however, the miles traveled has risen by 10.2%.

3. Saving Money in Nevada:

It appears that a large percentage of the decrease in gas consumption was due to the slower speeds. In Nevada, based upon a 65 cents per gallon cost, the average motorist saved \$92.53 in fuel costs per vehicle for the year of 1976 as compared to 1975.

ENFORCEMENT

Although there was much voluntary compliance with the speed limit at its inception, it is apparent that the majority of motorists today comply with the speed limit only through enforcement by the Highway Patrol and the other law enforcement agencies.

Approximately 55% of the traffic citations issued for hazardous moving violations by the Nevada Highway Patrol during 1976 were for violations of the 55 mph speed limit.

A breakdown of the number of citations issued by the Patrol for violation of the national maximum speed limit follows:

<u>10/74-9/75</u>	<u>10/75-9/76</u>	<u>10/76-3/77 (6 mos)</u>
38,045	57,562	29,373

The breakdown is by the Federal Fiscal Year because of the Federal mandate to report on this basis.

The large numbers of citations issued for speeding in excess of 55 mph were only possible because of the RADAR speed clocking devices obtained through this project.

The project became effective March 1, 1976; however, the RADAR equipment could not be obtained and placed into use until May 29, 1976. In spite of this delay, the Highway Patrol issued 65,586 citations for violation of the NMSL during the 12 month project period (3/76-2/77).

SPEED COMPLIANCE

For a comparison of speed limit compliance, following is listed some Highway Department speed monitoring statistics for the period preceding the implementation of the RADAR speed clocking devices compared to the latest speed monitoring statistics:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>AVERAGE SPEED (MPH)</u>	<u>85TH PERCENTILE SPEED (MPH)</u>	<u>PERCENTILE IN EXCESS 55 MPH (%)</u>
May-1976	57.2	63.1	58.7
May-1977	56.6	62.1	56.3

These statistics alone point towards an extremely successful program.