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County Administration Office
221 S. Roop Street, Suite 4
Susanville, CA 96130
Phone: 530-251-8333
Fax: 530-251-2663

January 26, 2021

Dave Moore
Caltrans District 2 Director
1657 Riverside Drive
Redding, CA 96001

RE: US 395 Speed Limit

Dear Mr. Moore:

On behalf of the Lassen County Board of Supervisors, I write to urge Caltrans to support any legislative or regulatory changes to adopt a universal speed limit of 65 miles per hour for both heavy trucks and passenger vehicles along the section of US highway 395 from Hallelujah Junction to the State Route 36 junction in Lassen County.

Along this section of highway, the State of California restricts the maximum speed of heavy trucks to 55 miles per hour and 65 miles per hour for passenger vehicles. This differential speed limit is resulting in traffic backups behind heavy trucks, increasing demand for passing toward oncoming traffic, and consequently drivers dangerously violating passing laws.

The Lassen County Transportation Commission recently received a presentation titled Safety Evaluation of Current Conditions and Future Expansion of that segment US highway 395 in Lassen County by Sacramento State University. This report provided historical and current traffic volume data, heavy vehicle data, and crash data.

As you will certainly recall in 2017, Caltrans District 2 issued a Transportation Concept Report for this section of highway. Subsequently on March 27, 2020, Caltrans' Division of Research, Innovation and System Information published a report titled Differential

Truck Speed Limit on Rural Two-Lane Highways: Survey of Practice. Both documents report the community's concern about the negative impact and safety issues resulting from the State of California's policy of differential speed limits for trucks vs passenger vehicles.

The Lassen County Board of Supervisors opposes having differential speed limits in Lassen County. California has the lowest maximum speed limit for heavy trucks 55 mph, while neighboring states of Oregon, Nevada, and Arizona have maximum speed limits of 65 mph, 80 mph, and 75 mph, respectfully.

The Board supports any legislative or regulatory effort that Caltrans' District 2 can initiate toward implementing an interim or permanent universal speed limit of at least 65 mph along this section of roadway.

Please give us regular updates of Caltrans' progress being made towards solving this important and urgent matter.

Sincerely,

AARON ALBAUGH, Chairman

County of Lassen
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



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February 13, 2018

The Honorable Brian Dahle
Capitol Office, Room 3104
PO Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0001

Re: US 395 Speed Limit

Dear Assemblymember Dahle,

Caltrans is circulating its draft United States Route 395 Transportation Concept Report (TCR) for the portion of US 395 within Lassen, Modoc, and Sierra Counties. The report contains a summary of comments made by your constituents and ours about how the State of California should be addressing the greatest needs within the route. We greatly appreciate this work by Caltrans to better understand and develop steps to improve US 395 for our fellow Californians and visitors to the State.

At local public workshops, community members gave input about a significant safety issue needing immediate attention by Caltrans. The issue is concerning the differential speed limits of truck and passenger vehicles traveling in a 50-mile two-lane segment of the route from Hallelujah Junction to the State Route 36 junction. The differential speed limit is when traffic must adhere to different maximum speed limits. In this segment of roadway, the maximum speed limit is 55 miles per hour for trucks and 65 miles per hour for passenger cars. This issue is resulting in traffic backups behind trucks, increased demand for passing toward oncoming traffic, and consequently drivers dangerously violating passing laws.

Caltrans has identified this two-lane route with factors that support upgrading this portion to a four-lane divided expressway. Such an improvement would certainly resolve the differential speed limit issue, however, the key challenges to implementation is that it will take multiple decades of study and millions of dollars of funding that is not available.

There is another option that is encouraging enough to merit further investigation by the State. According to the report, a possible interim measure would be for the State to consider implementing a universal speed limit (USL) along this segment of US 395. The report discusses some studies having "findings are either neutral or somewhat suggest support for a USL."

Caltrans should consider the USL option immediately. Perhaps a legislative fix is needed to consider the USL option because of California Vehicle Code Section 22406 that has set highway vehicle maximum speed of 55 miles per hour for trucks.

Nevertheless, we respectfully urge State action this year to investigate and implement a universal speed limit from Hallelujah Junction to the State Route 36 junction.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Chris Gallagher".

CHRIS GALLAGHER, Chairman
Lassen County Board of Supervisors

Attachment

cf: State Senator Ted Gaines
City of Susanville City Council
Lassen County Transportation Commission
Lassen County Transit Services Agency
Mr. Dave Moore, Director, Caltrans District 2
Mr. Scott White, Chief, Caltrans District 2 Office of System Planning