



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
16 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0016

ANGUS S. KING, JR.
GOVERNOR

JOHN G. MELROSE
COMMISSIONER

October 24, 2001

New Law on Speed Limits

Dear Municipal Official:

As you may be aware, recent changes in legislation which affect who sets certain speed limits for Maine's public roads became law on September 21. The purpose of this letter is to outline the law and provide you with the information which you will need to determine whether your municipality wants to "get into the business" of setting speed limits on local roads. We are also sending you a list of those roads in your municipality which you do NOT have the authority to set speed limits on, since it is a shorter list than the one with roads that you may set speed limits on.

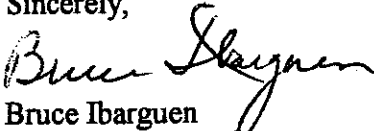
Because your town has a 2000 US Census population over 2500, your town has the option of choosing to control local speed limits. If your town decides that the MDOT should remain in control of these speed limits because it has the expertise, equipment, and experience in this area, **nothing changes for your town.** Any speed limit changes on any state or local road would still be done by the MDOT after a written request from the municipality.

If your town decides to "opt in", then you must refer to the enclosed materials and provide written documentation to the MDOT on the enclosed BLUE form letter. Please read the material beforehand because "speed zoning" can be difficult, time-consuming, and create many local headaches if not done correctly. For example, lowering speed limits to "get people to slow down" is a major misconception and should **NOT** be done. It is important to remember that once your town decides to take on this responsibility, you are now responsible for all speed limits on all local roads in the future. Speed limits must be set properly using the proper traffic engineering standards and the law is very specific about the process and the standards.

If your municipality has a 2000 census population over 5000, the Department may require you to provide the Department with technical data when requesting a speed zone review. Technical data could include a radar speed study, the length of section being reviewed, the total number of access points along the section of roadway, the total number of businesses and the number of roadway intersections. This requirement is completely independent of whether or not your town wants to "opt in" to setting speed limits. This requirement is based totally on population.

Feel free to call Peter Coughlan in the Community Services Division at 287-2152 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,


Bruce Ibarguen
MDOT Traffic Engineer



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