

**CONFIDENTIAL**  
**LEGISLATIVE BILL REVIEW FORM: 2015**

Bill Number: H.196 Name of Bill: An Act relating to digital speed limit signs and authorizing temporary speed limits

Agency/ Dept: Vermont State Police

Author of Bill Review: Lt. Garry Scott

Date of Bill Review: 2/13/15

Related Bills and Key Players VTrans, VSP, Fire and EMS agencies that work on the interstate.

Status of Bill: (check one):  Upon Introduction  As passed by 1<sup>st</sup> body  As passed by both

**Recommended Position:**

Support  Oppose  Remain Neutral  Support with modifications identified in #8 below

**Analysis of Bill**

**1. Summary of bill and issue it addresses.**

This bill proposes to require the Agency of Transportation to install digital speed limit signs between Exit 8 (Montpelier) and Exit 13 (I-189 South Burlington) on Interstate 89; authorize the Secretary of Transportation to establish temporary speed limits below the speed limits established by the Traffic Committee on Interstate 89 between Exits 8 and 13, as necessary to reflect safe speeds during periods of unfavorable road conditions; direct the Secretary of Transportation to evaluate the effect on traffic 2 safety of establishing such temporary speed limits.

**2. Is there a need for this bill?**

Yes. The section of I-89 between Exit 8 and Exit 13 (and in fact between Exit 13 and Exit 16, as noted below) is an area where excessive speed during winter storms continues to lead to increased numbers of crashes. It is not uncommon for the State Police to respond to more than fifty (50) motor vehicle incidents/crashes during a winter storm between exits 16 to exit 8 on Interstate 89. There is an average of 130 reportable crashes between exits 8 to 16 each year during the winter months. This does not include the number of non-reportable traffic incidents that occur.

**3. What are likely to be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for this Department?**

There would be no known fiscal cost to VSP - Dept. Public Safety.

**4. What might be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for other departments in state government, and what is likely to be their perspective on it?**

VTrans estimates roughly \$220,000 in initial capital costs, and another \$22,000 in ongoing O&M costs to meet the intent of this bill (with suggested modifications as noted below). Programmatically, this would require coordination with the Department of Public Safety to successfully implement. We would also need to develop standard operating procedures. However, getting the traveling public to slow down would make the highway safer for our workforce (we have had a number of plow trucks hit this year by careless drivers) as well as the other users of the infrastructure.

**5. What might be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for others, and what is likely to be their perspective on it? (for example, public, municipalities, organizations, business, regulated entities, etc)**

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Based on feedback received this winter, I believe the public at large would support this. Although temporary lower speed limits during winter storms would effectively slow down a large percentage of the law abiding travelers, the overall safety improvements to the highway corridor may in fact improve their travel times from origin to destination. One crash slows everybody down and can even close the road. At slower speeds, perhaps we can help the road stay open during even a harsh winter storm.

**6. Other Stakeholders:**

**6.1 Who else is likely to support the proposal and why?** The Vermont Highway Safety Alliance, VTrans and fire/EMS agencies would support this legislation, as it promotes highway safety and supports a reduction in winter crashes.

**6.2 Who else is likely to oppose the proposal and why?** N/A

**7. Rationale for recommendation:**

“Driving too fast for conditions” continues to be a leading cause of winter crashes. This section of I-89 continues to have more winter crashes than other areas of Vermont’s interstate highways. Many of those crashes are documented as having been speed related. Our current speed advisories are not enforceable, but the temporary speed limit established by this bill would be.

**8. Specific modifications that would be needed to recommend support of this bill:**

Based on crash data, we recommend changing the limits identified in this bill. Instead of going from Exit 8 to Exit 13, we recommend going from Exit 8 to Exit 16. This modification could fall under T23 VSA 1006a

**9. Gubernatorial appointments to board or commission?** No.



**Secretary/Commissioner has reviewed this document:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** 3/12/15