

**Item 15-28 Draft Letter to the Senate Committee on Transportation and Housing from CTCDC**

**Agency Making Request/Sponsor:** Caltrans/ Hamid Bahadori

**Background**

Senate Bill 632 proposed legislation that raised engineering issues that were beyond the expertise of the Senate Committee on Transportation and Housing. The CTCDC has been requested to review and examine these issues and report back in 2016. A CTCDC sub-committee was formed to examine these issues and in June 30, 2016, the recommendations of the subcommittee were approved by the CTCDC members. In the September 1, 2016 CTCDC meeting, Committee Members had requested a status report on the letter to the Senate Transportation Committee replying to their request for a CTCDC recommendation for school zones. The Draft Letter is being provided to the CTCDC members for their review and comments.

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California

## California Traffic Control Devices Committee



Date: MM DD YYYY

Senator Jim Beall & Senator Anthony Cannella  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Transportation and Housing  
State Capitol, Room 2209  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Beall & Senator Cannella:

The Senate Committee on Transportation and Housing had requested the California Traffic Control Devices Committee (CTCDC) to review and examine current language in the California Vehicle Code (CVC) regarding school zones and the conditions when school speed limit is in effect in September 2015 and report back in 2016. The request was regarding extending the school zone and school speed limit signing changes.

A CTCDC subcommittee was formed in December 2015 to examine these topics and consider if there is a need to revise the CVC language. This subcommittee has spent numerous hours and had thoroughly vetted the issues surrounding extending the school zones and proposed change "when children are present" standards. In the CTCDC meeting held on June 30, 2016, the recommendations of the subcommittee were approved by the CTCDC members. The existing laws and the recommendations of the subcommittee as pertaining to the length of the school zone and when school zone speed limit is in effect are provided below.

### **LENGTH OF SCHOOL ZONE**

The existing laws regarding the length of the school zone are summarized below. As per CVC 22352 and CVC 22358.4 (b) (1) (B)

#### **Current Law**

- School speed zone is applicable from 500 feet away from school grounds.
- Local authority may extend School speed zone by ordinance or resolution up to 1000 feet from school grounds under the following conditions:
  1. School speed limit no less than 25 mph
  2. In a residence district, on a highway with a posted speed limit of 30 miles per hour or slower
  3. On a roadway with a maximum of two traffic lanes.

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**Recommendation from the subcommittee:**

Maintain the existing law and add the following text to the CVC:

- On any roadway approaching a school, school zones may be extended to 300 feet beyond an uncontrolled school crosswalk (marked school crosswalk without traffic control) that is located up to 1000 feet from the school grounds when all of the following conditions are met:
  1. The uncontrolled marked school crosswalk is between 500 feet and 1000 feet from the school grounds and is located where there is no existing traffic control, and
  2. based on an engineering and traffic study that demonstrates a collision history with school-aged pedestrians or school-aged bicyclists going to or from the school grounds, and
  3. based on an engineering and traffic study, that it is not warranted to install a protected crosswalk with traffic control devices such as stop signs, signals or pedestrian hybrid beacons or implement other measures such as a roundabout at that location or move the unprotected crosswalk as close to the school grounds as practicable, and
  4. the route is designated as a Safe Routes to School route, and
  5. there does not exist a crosswalk closer to the school grounds which can serve the need of school-aged pedestrians to cross the roadway.
- Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a local authority may not declare a speed limit of less than 25 mph where a school zone has been extended to greater than 500 feet from school grounds. (same as current law)

Support: The above additional text eliminates the restriction on extending the school zone up to 1000 feet to only locations in a residence district with a posted speed limit of 30 mph or less, and allows extending the school zone up to 1000 feet on any roadway or 1300 feet with an uncontrolled crosswalk, with the restriction that it be for the purpose of slowing traffic where children are crossing the roadway in an unprotected crosswalk.

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**WHEN SCHOOL SPEED LIMIT IN EFFECT**

The existing laws regarding the time the school speed limit time is in effect are summarized below. As per CVC 22352 and CVC 22358.4 (b) (1)

**Current Law**

- While children are going to or leaving the school either during school hours or during the noon recess period.
- While the grounds are in use by children where the school grounds are not separated from the highway by a fence, gate, or other physical barrier.

**Recommendation from the subcommittee:**

No change is recommended

I appreciate the opportunity given to the CTCDC to comment on SB 632 by the Senate Committee on Transportation and Housing.

Sincerely,

Mark Greenwood  
Chairman CTCDC

cc: CTCDC Members  
CTCDC Files

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September 10, 2015

Hamid Bahadori, Chair  
California Traffic Control Devices Committee  
Automobile Club of Southern California  
3333 Fairview Road  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

Dear Mr. Bahadori:

Senator Cannella introduced legislation this year, SB 632, which would:

- Authorize a local authority to establish a prima facie speed limit of 15 mph or 25 mph in a residence district, on a highway with a posted speed limit of 30 mph or slower, within 1,320 feet of a school building or school grounds that are contiguous to a highway or school grounds that are not separated from the highway by a fence, gate, or other physical barrier;
- Authorize a local authority, upon the basis of an engineering and travel survey documenting school attendance boundaries and/or travel patterns to and from a school, to extend the maximum distance to establish a prima facie speed limit and school warning signs to a distance and/or specific locations that are consistent with the survey findings; and
- Remove the “when children are present” standard and authorize a local authority to designate these low-speed school zones to be in effect according to alternative methodologies, up to 24 hours a day.

Committee members and staff have engaged in discussion over this bill and it has become clear to us that this legislation raises engineering issues that are beyond the expertise of this committee. Specifically, should a school zone extend to one-quarter mile, or more, beyond a school? Should “when children are present” be replaced by another standard?

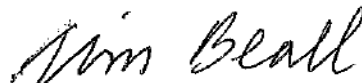
Mr. Hamid Bahadori

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Given the engineering questions raised by SB 632, members of the Senate Transportation and Housing Committee feel that it is appropriate to refer these questions to the California Traffic Control Devices Committee (CTCDC) for review. We urge the CTCDC and its associated experts to seriously examine these issues. We also urge the CTCDC to report to the Senate Transportation and Housing Committee, in writing, by April 1, 2016, as to its findings on these issues and any further actions, if any, that the CTCDC plans to take or recommends that the Legislature take.

Thank you for your consideration and response.

Sincerely,



SENATOR JIM BEALL  
Chair



SENATOR ANTHONY CANNELLA  
Vice Chair

cc: Members, Senate Transportation and Housing Committee  
Malcolm Dougherty, Director, California Department of Transportation