



Bill Summary

AB 1014 aims to improve road safety, particularly in high-traffic and vulnerable areas, by providing more flexibility in setting speed limits and addressing local safety issues.

Specifically, this bill has two main objectives:

1. Establishes clear guidelines for adjusting speed limits in high-traffic areas with vulnerable road users, such as locations with a high concentration of pedestrians, cyclists, or areas designated as "safety corridors" due to higher rates of collisions or fatalities.
2. Creates the option to adjust speed limits on state highways, including reductions up to ten miles per hour, based on specific safety concerns.

This bill aims to improve public safety by giving local authorities and CalTrans additional tools to adjust speed limits in response to specific conditions, such as the presence of vulnerable populations and high-risk areas. These measures aim to create safer road conditions for vulnerable groups like children, seniors, people with disabilities, and the unhoused.

Background

In California, speed limits are determined by engineering and traffic surveys that assess the 85th percentile speed, or the speed at which 85% of vehicles travel in free-flowing conditions. The California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices outlines the rules for setting these speed limits. However, adjustments are sometimes needed based on safety concerns, infrastructure, and road conditions.

In rural areas, highways often bisect communities, parks, and other pockets with high foot traffic. For example, Highway 116 bisects Duncans Mills in Sonoma County, and Highway 199 runs through Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park. These roads can be particularly dangerous for pedestrians, cyclists,

individuals with disabilities, and people unfamiliar with local road conditions. Pedestrians may cross highways to travel between areas, or tourists may walk alongside highways to reach campsites.

Currently, the method used to set speed limits—based on the 85th percentile speed—can result in higher speed limits, even in areas with high pedestrian or cyclist traffic. This can be counterproductive and fails to account for the safety of vulnerable road users.

Issue

The current process for setting speed limits does not adequately address the specific safety concerns found in high-traffic areas of rural highways. Speed limits that aren't adjusted to reflect local conditions put pedestrians, cyclists, and other vulnerable users at significant risk.

This legislation is crucial for enhancing public safety and ensuring that local jurisdictions can respond effectively to evolving safety concerns in their communities.

For More Information:

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Support

- Del Norte County (Sponsor)
- Streets for All