



metropolitan section of new york & new jersey

September 2, 2008

To:

The Honorable Jon Corzine, Governor, State of New Jersey

The Honorable Richard Codey, President, New Jersey State Senate

The Honorable Joseph J. Roberts, Jr., Speaker, New Jersey General Assembly

The members of our Metropolitan Section of NY & NJ, the local chapter of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), work to improve mobility, safety and community development within the New Jersey-New York area. ITE is an international association of over 16,000 transportation professionals that facilitates the application of technology to research, planning operation, policy development and management for all transportation modes.

We write here regarding bills A2731 and S1908, which would permit municipalities and counties to make certain traffic engineering decisions without approval of the New Jersey Department of Transportation.

According to existing law and practice, the NJ Department of Transportation for many years has been charged with reviewing and approving decisions by local jurisdictions regarding traffic regulations and traffic control devices on local roadways. We believe that, in principle, this is a valuable process, aimed at assuring safe, effective, uniform traffic control systems throughout the State. Enhanced safety, optimum system efficiency, and improved environmental conditions require not only the use of standard devices but also consistent application of those devices. Drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists do not know, and do not care, which jurisdiction installed or operates a traffic control device. They do want, and deserve, consistent use in comparable situations.

It is recognized that the proposed legislation requires consistency with the current standards of the Manual on Uniform Control Devices for Streets and Highways (MUTCD). That is a key "first step" in successful traffic engineering. But, it is also true that the MUTCD is a starting point, that final decisions on traffic control devices also involve considerable application of engineering judgment, on a case-by-case basis.

We realize that, due to reduced resources at NJ Department of Transportation, timely State review and approval of local traffic engineering actions may no

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longer be feasible. But consistent application of the traffic regulations and devices should remain as a goal.

Therefore, we urge that if this legislation is enacted, NJ Department of Transportation should monitor traffic engineering actions by local jurisdictions and report back to the Governor and to the Legislature. This report, perhaps on an annual basis, would focus on how the local agencies are applying the concepts in the MUTCD and how their actions coordinate with the State's use of the MUTCD principles.

To avoid undue administrative burdens the local agencies could, on a quarterly basis, send a listing to the State showing title and brief description for each major traffic engineering project during that quarter. The description, a few sentences, would cover projects such as: traffic signals (new or major revisions), regulatory or guide signs, traffic calming measures, traffic marking changes, etc. The NJ Department of Transportation could then audit these projects on a sampling basis, consistent with available resources.

These recommendations are offered in the hope that they will be useful for the continuing enhancement of the safety, efficiency and environmental quality of New Jersey roadways, as part of the State's overall mobility program. As always, we remain available to provide whatever technical advice that may be helpful.

Should you have any questions, I can be reached at 732-343-6220 during business hours or by mail at the address below.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Edward J. Bolden".

Edward J. Bolden
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