

## CITIZENS FOR SAFE WORK ZONES (CSWZ)

Chair Scott Newman, Sen. John Jasinski, Sen. Jeff Howe, Sen. Osmek, Sen. Karla Bigham

Chair Frank Hornstein, Rep. Erin Koegel, Rep. Luke Frederick, Rep. Steve Elkins, Rep John Petersburg

### **Support for House Section 98/Article 6, Work Zone Safety: Assessment and Pilot Program Development**

Conferees,

Our constructions work zones are become more dangerous all the time, during the pandemic it has been worse as we have seen speeds soar on our roadways.

Less congestion seems to have led to excessive speeds. Citizens for Safe Work Zones and other advocates for safer construction work zones urge adoption of the House language to reduce work zone crashes, deaths, injuries and property damage.

As Paul Aasen, Minnesota Safety Council, points out in his letter that across the country, a work zone crash happens every 5 ½ minutes, with 70 injuries a day and 12 fatalities a week.

A recent Pennsylvania's study found that 39% of all their work zone crashes involve speeding and 82% of crashes occur when law enforcement is not present.

Bringing it closer to home - In Minnesota this summer, at a busy work zone along I-35W south of Highway 96 in Arden Hills --during the first full week of August 2020 – total volume of southbound vehicles numbered 332,000 over six days/24 hours per day. **An astounding 46% of these vehicles were speeding 10 miles or more over the posted work zone speed limit (about 152,000 vehicles!)** The contractor's attenuator equipment used in this work zone was hit by vehicles more than 30 times by end of August.

One might think that with reduced traffic on the road Insurance claims might have dropped but that is not the case. While there were fewer crashes the severity of the crashes has increased due to the high rates of speed.

#### **Last year testimony was presented from:**

- 1) a flagger, who is a wife, mother, daughter, was struck by a motorist - forever changing her life
- 2) the spouse of a worker was killed in a work zone – he was a husband, father, son. (one of his colleagues was also killed in this crashing leaving behind another family without a husband, father and son.

When these crashes occur – they may end a life and always change the lives of the individuals left behind. They are just three of the reasons we are here today.

**Two of the companies who put workers in the constructions work zones have asked for your help in reducing speeds there.**

As Mr. Lewis of Warning Lights states in his letter:

*This proposal could give workers the tool they have been looking for to keep the 1000's of workers that spend their long summer days working within feet --of 70-80 mph traffic --- **safe**.....along with the traveling public.*

Mr. Leidle states in his letter:

*We need to change behavior in Minnesota and have it be known that speeding in Work Zones is not tolerable and puts everyone at risk when we all want our family members to make it home safe every day.*

As to the Supreme Court case often referenced the court did not find the use of cameras unconstitutional, rather that Minneapolis was in conflict with state law.

**The Supreme Court ended their findings in State v. Kuhlman with this this language:** “We hold that Minneapolis Code of Ordinances sections 474.620 to 474.670 are invalid because they are in conflict with the ACT, and specifically with Minn. Stat. 169.06,subd. 4(a) and Minn. State. 169.022.”

The House language proposed simply requires MnDOT and DPS/State Patrol to review potential issues and concerns including potential legal and financial barriers, evaluate them and bring you a report with recommendations based on their findings.

Legislative review by transportation and public safety/judiciary committees would be required before implementation of any potential speed enforcement pilot.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this important safety issue to the men and women working in construction work zones and the motoring public.

Attached is a list of some of the supporters for pilot project on automated speed enforcement in work zones together with some letters in support. A wide variety of industry, unions and public safety advocates have come together in support of safer work zones. I have attached a list of some of these supporters.

**Please put yourselves in the boots of the workers and commit to work zone safety.**

In closing we urge your adoption of the House provision Section 98, beginning on R167. We do not believe an appropriation is required for the agencies to have this collaborative discussion with others.

Sincerely,

*Sherry Munyon*

On behalf of **Citizens for Safe Work Zones**

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