



# Minnesota County Engineers Association



1360 University Avenue West, Suite 131 • St. Paul, MN 55104

[mncountyengineers.org](http://mncountyengineers.org)

## **PRESIDENT MEL ODENS**

Public Works Director  
**Kandiyohi County**  
1801 Hwy 12 East  
Willmar, MN 56201  
(320) 235-3266 ext. 4105  
[mel.odens@kcmn.us](mailto:mel.odens@kcmn.us)

## **VICE PRESIDENT LYNDON ROBJENT**

Public Works Division Director  
County Engineer  
**Carver County**  
11360 Highway 212  
Cologne, MN 55322  
(612) 247-6348  
[lrobjent@co.carver.mn.us](mailto:lrobjent@co.carver.mn.us)

## **TREASURER**

### **KEITH BERNDT**

County Engineer  
**Norman County**  
814 East Main Street  
Ada, MN 56510  
(218) 784-5443  
[keith.berndt@co.norman.mn.us](mailto:keith.berndt@co.norman.mn.us)

## **SECRETARY**

### **RYAN THILGES**

County Engineer  
Public Works Director  
**Blue Earth County**  
35 Map Drive | PO Box 3083  
Mankato, MN 56002  
(507) 304-4031  
[ryan.thilges@blueearthcountymn.gov](mailto:ryan.thilges@blueearthcountymn.gov)

## **PAST PRESIDENT BRIAN POGODZINSKI**

County Engineer  
**Houston County**  
1124 East Washington Street  
Caledonia, MN 55921  
(507) 725-3925  
[brian.pogodzinski@co.houston.mn.us](mailto:brian.pogodzinski@co.houston.mn.us)

## **AFFILIATED WITH**



Association of  
Minnesota Counties

March 6, 2024

Sen. Scott Dibble, Chair  
Senate Transportation Committee

Chair Dibble and Members of the Committee:

The Minnesota County Engineers Association (MCEA) has a long-standing platform position supporting the exclusive role of the Commissioner of Transportation in establishing speed zones on all roadways as provided in statute. Statute also currently authorizes local agencies to establish school zone speed limits on their respective roadways based on a similar, but not identical, engineering study process. The engineering study process is one that has served county and city engineers very well for many years and has ensured statewide consistency of the evaluation process while allowing the actual school zone speed limit to reflect site-specific conditions during school operations.

Safety on our roadways is the number one priority for county engineers and school zone speed limits are a critically important tool when applied judiciously. School sites across Minnesota have widely varying characteristics, including many in rural areas with no pedestrian activity. Currently, the location, extent, and speed of school speed limits within school zones is determined by the road authority through MnDOT guidance, and follows a consistent, statewide collaborative approach considering the many individual conditions near a given school. Establishing an arbitrary limit of 15 mph at all school zones will diminish driver compliance with school zone speed limits at places where they are truly justified and will in many cases be hazardous, especially in rural highway locations that lack school pedestrian activity.

Our association strongly supports the implementation of proven effective strategies to improve the safety of students. Infrastructure programs such as Safe Routes to School allow for the construction of such strategies, including sidewalks, trails, and controlled crosswalks. However, the posting of arbitrary 15 mph school speed limits in a rural highway environment would significantly increase conflicts between vehicles and thereby reduce safety.

Minnesota's "Guide for Establishing School Zone Speed Limits" is updated periodically and was last updated in June 2023 with significant revisions and included input from a wide cross section of City, County, and MnDOT staff along with references to recent safety research on the effectiveness of school speed limits in various contexts. This document will continue to be updated to reflect new research and ongoing changes to other referenced documents such as the Minnesota Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MnMUTCD) and the MnDOT Traffic Engineering Manual (TEM).



# Minnesota County Engineers Association



1360 University Avenue West, Suite 131 • St. Paul, MN 55104

[mncountyengineers.org](http://mncountyengineers.org)

**PRESIDENT  
MEL ODENS**

Public Works Director  
**Kandiyohi County**  
1801 Hwy 12 East  
Willmar, MN 56201  
(320) 235-3266 ext. 4105  
[mel.odens@kcmn.us](mailto:mel.odens@kcmn.us)

**VICE PRESIDENT  
LYNDON ROBJENT**

Public Works Division Director  
County Engineer  
**Carver County**  
11360 Highway 212  
Cologne, MN 55322  
(612) 247-6348  
[lrobjent@co.carver.mn.us](mailto:lrobjent@co.carver.mn.us)

**TREASURER**

**KEITH BERNDT**

County Engineer  
**Norman County**  
814 East Main Street  
Ada, MN 56510  
(218) 784-5443  
[keith.berndt@co.norman.mn.us](mailto:keith.berndt@co.norman.mn.us)

**SECRETARY**

**RYAN THILGES**

County Engineer  
Public Works Director  
**Blue Earth County**  
35 Map Drive | PO Box 3083  
Mankato, MN 56002  
(507) 304-4031  
[ryan.thilges@blueearthcountymn.gov](mailto:ryan.thilges@blueearthcountymn.gov)

**PAST PRESIDENT**

**BRIAN POGODZINSKI**

County Engineer  
**Houston County**  
1124 East Washington Street  
Caledonia, MN 55921  
(507) 725-3925  
[brian.pogodzinski@co.houston.mn.us](mailto:brian.pogodzinski@co.houston.mn.us)

**AFFILIATED WITH**



Association of  
Minnesota Counties

MCEA is also deeply concerned regarding provisions in this bill that preclude enforcement of pedestrian safety laws in all but the most exigent circumstances. In the seven-county metro area, approximately 40% of vulnerable road user crashes occur at traffic signals, and violation of traffic signal indications by vulnerable road users is already a factor in a substantial portion of these crashes. Further encouraging such violations, and conditioning enforcement on a new and subjective standard, would encourage greater violation of traffic signal indications and a corresponding increase in fatal and injury crashes involving vulnerable road users. While MCEA acknowledges that some existing statutes relating to pedestrian crossing may benefit from some modernization, we would instead recommend that any revisions to these statutes be proposed and vetted by the Minnesota Advisory Council on Traffic Safety as created by legislation in 2023.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on SF3993.

Sincerely,

Mel Odens, P.E.  
*President, Minnesota County Engineers Association*