

April 22, 2025

The Honorable John Marty
Chair, Finance Committee
3235 Minnesota Senate Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Eric Pratt
Ranking Minority Member, Finance Committee
2217 Minnesota Senate Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

SUBJECT: Opposition to SF 2082 Amendment A2 Lines 64.8 to 64.17 – Proposed Statutory Speed Limit on Steele County State-Aid Highway 12

Dear Chair Marty, Ranking Minority Member Pratt, and Members of the Finance Committee:

On behalf of the Minnesota Society of Professional Engineers (MnSPE), we are writing to express our strong opposition to the provision beginning at Line 64.8 in the SCS2082A-2 amendment to SF 2082, which establishes statutory speed limits on Steele County State-Aid Highway 12 within the City of Medford.

MnSPE represents over 600 licensed Professional Engineers (PEs) across Minnesota, with a mission to uphold and advance the responsible and ethical practice of engineering in service to public health, safety, and welfare. Our members work in both the public and private sectors and play critical roles in infrastructure planning, design, and traffic safety throughout the state.

This provision would bypass Minnesota's long-standing and proven engineering-based approach for establishing speed limits. Under current law and practice, speed limits are determined following a traffic engineering study that includes detailed analysis of roadway conditions, operating speeds, crash data, and other relevant factors. Professional Engineers are directly involved in leading and overseeing this process, ensuring that speed limits are appropriately and consistently set to reflect actual conditions and promote safety.

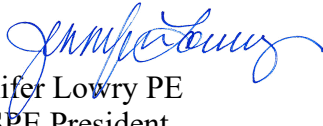
By inserting a location-specific speed limit into statute without the involvement of a PE or an engineering study, this provision introduces an arbitrary decision that lacks technical justification. Such an approach undermines the credibility of Minnesota's traffic safety system and could expose the state, county, or city to increased liability. Speed limits established outside the engineering process may be difficult to defend in the event of a crash or legal dispute, particularly if they conflict with observed driver behavior or established roadway design.

Rather than legislating speed limits, MnSPE advocates for a collaborative solution in which the City of Medford and Steele County work together with a licensed Professional Engineer to develop a roadway design that encourages lower speeds in a safe and engineered manner. This could include context-sensitive traffic calming measures such as narrowed lane widths, pedestrian enhancements, or geometric modifications—all rooted in professional engineering design and safety analysis. This approach ensures the desired outcomes are achieved responsibly and effectively, without undermining engineering standards or setting problematic precedents.

MnSPE urges the Senate Finance Committee to remove this provision from the amendment and reaffirm Minnesota's commitment to engineering-led infrastructure decision-making.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SF 2082. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Darin Mielke at dmielke@carvercountymn.gov or (952) 465-6795.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Lowry PE
MnSPE President



Darin Mielke PE
MnSPE Legislative Advocacy Committee Chair