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OEC Opposes Bill to Increase State Speed Limit

This “wrong turn” would increase fuel consumption, smog, and other pollution

Columbus, OH - Today, the Ohio Environmental Council joins the Ohio Highway Patrol in Opposing Ohio House Bill 162, which was debated this morning before the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

The bill, sponsored by Reps. Dan Dodd (D-Hebron) and Timothy DeGeeter (D-Parma), would allow the state to raise the speed limit for passenger vehicles from 65 miles per hour to 70 miles per hour on interstate highways.

Increasing Ohio speed limits, however, would also have the effect of increasing fuel consumption, smog, and greenhouse gas pollution in the state. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, vehicles use significantly more gas at higher speeds. For example, for every 10 miles per hour above 60 driven, the average vehicle will be 10 percent less fuel efficient—meaning that faster cars use more fuel and generate more pollutants.

“We believe that passing this legislation would be a wrong turn for Ohio communities,” said Jack Shaner, OEC’s Deputy Director. “More speeding through Ohio’s metro areas will only result in more greenhouse gases in the air we breathe and more smog obscuring our skylines.”

Less efficient driving and greater fuel consumption and emissions could exacerbate existing air quality concerns in Ohio. Currently, numerous metropolitan counties in Ohio, including Franklin, Cuyahoga, and Franklin, are classified as “non-attainment” areas under the federal Clean Air Act due to excessive concentrations of air pollutants from vehicle emissions.

The Ohio State Highway Patrol also testified in opposition to the bill, noting that higher speed limits could result in more traffic accidents and fatalities in Ohio.

“Safety concerns and the potential for increased air emissions are both valid reasons to oppose this legislation,” said Shaner. “We urge the General Assembly to put the brakes on H.B. 162 and keep our speed limit at 65.”

The mission of the Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) is to secure healthy air, land, and water for all who call Ohio home. The OEC is Ohio's leading advocate for fresh air, clean water, and sustainable land use. The OEC has a 40-year history of innovation, pragmatism, and success. Using legislative initiatives, legal action, scientific principles, and statewide partnerships, the OEC secures a healthier environment for Ohio's families and communities. For more information, visit www.theOEC.org.