

To: Michigan House Transportation Committee

From: Steve Leuty, Kalamazoo Township trustee, 269-345-6981 (home)

CC: Representative Julie Rogers, 60<sup>th</sup> House District  
Senator Sean McCann, Senate District 20  
Representative Bradley Slagh, 90<sup>th</sup> House District  
Michigan Township Association

Date: February 19, 2021

Re: House Bill 4014

I support House Bill 4014 because it seeks to provide local communities more flexibility to consider public safety factors. HB 4014 is needed because the current process for evaluating speed limits overly relies on the eighty-fifth percentile speed.

Reasonable speeds matter. The AAA Foundation found the average risk of severe injury for a pedestrian struck by a vehicle reaches 50% at 31 mph, 75% at 39 mph, and 90% at 46 mph. And, the average risk of death for a pedestrian reaches 25% at 32 mph, 50% at 42 mph, and 75% at 50 mph.

In addition, there may be an opportunity to enhance HB 4014 to:

- increase transparency by requiring a road commission and Michigan State Police (MSP) to disclose in detail the basis for their findings of “an objective evaluation of the characteristics of the highway” and, if challenged, the “engineering and safety study”, and
- identify who will conduct the initial “objective evaluation”, who may challenge the findings, and, if challenged, who will conduct the “engineering and safety study”.

In my area, the road commission conducts the traffic counts and speed studies, and the MSP evaluates crash data and performs a subjective, vague review of environmental conditions without revealing objective data. As a result, reliance on the eighty-fifth percentile speed dominates. Even more concerning, the road commission and MSP recently approved a speed limit increase in densely populated, urban Kalamazoo Township without the township’s consent, based on a request from an adjacent, rural township that shares the same corridor, which fails to honor the Michigan Traffic Code’s requirement for unanimous agreement between the township, MSP, and the road commission.

Thank you for your consideration.