

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Refer to: HOTO-1

February 15, 2000

Mr. Marchon C. Miller
Traffic Safety Coordinator
Regional Transportation Commission
1105 Terminal Way, Suite 108
Reno, NV 89502

Dear Mr. Miller:

Thank you for your January 31 letter to Mr. Donald P. Steinke requesting permission to experiment with your "Keep Kids Alive, Drive 55" sign. Mr. Steinke has recently retired and Mr. Jeffrey A. Lindley is now the Acting Director for the Office of Transportation Operations.

You have indicated in your letter that the proposed sign is patented. Copyrighted information and patented devices are not included in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). All traffic control devices included in the MUTCD are in the public domain and are available without charge for reproduction and use by any sign manufacturer.

In your experimental plan, you have indicated that the proposed sign is intended to be for informational purposes only. Speed Limit signs are not considered for informational purposes only. The MUTCD classifies Speed Limit signs as regulatory signs that represent traffic statutes and rules of the road which are enforceable by State law.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has been very concerned with the growing motorist disregard of traffic signs such as the STOP sign and the Speed Limit sign. Literature and studies have shown that enforcement and education are the keys to changing motorist behavior, especially motorist disregard of signs. Motorist disregard of signs is why speed humps have become prevalent as the preferred traffic calming device in many neighborhoods and communities. Speed humps physically slow down traffic, unlike signs which rely on motorist willingness to obey the sign message. In one of the revisions to the MUTCD, the FHWA deleted the "Slow Children at Play" sign because it was not effective at soliciting the appropriate driver response.

For the above reasons, the FHWA does not approve your request to experiment with the proposed "Keep Kids Alive, Drive 55" sign. However, we do believe that the use of your proposed design for bumper stickers, magnets, and key chains is a good way to educate motorists and raise public awareness of child safety. We also suggest that you contact the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). The ITE has conducted studies and published literature on a

variety of traffic calming methods. Their address is: 525 School Street, SW., Room 410, Washington, D.C. 20024-2797. For record keeping purposes, we have assigned this request the following official ruling number: "Request No. II-403(Expr.)–Keep Kids Alive, Drive 55 Sign."

Sincerely yours,

Jeffrey A. Lindley
Acting Director, Office of Transportation
Operations