

HB1421
Bill Testimony
Rep. Eric J. Murphy
District 43, Grand Forks

This bill provides for a change in the interstate speed limit to 80 mph with restrictions. It is comprised of three separate parts each meeting needs of different stakeholders.

1. A speed limit of 80 mph on interstate highways with a reduction to 60 mph in locations deemed necessary by North Dakota Department of Transportation (ND DOT) for safety.
2. A minimum speed limit of 40 mph on interstate highways. This was requested in conversations with NDHP in Grand Forks and in the 68th session the Transportation Committee heard testimony that the concern is closing speed at 80 mph upon a much slower moving vehicle and difficulty in judging the rate of closing when approaching a vehicle directly from behind.
3. A permit for agricultural producers to allow for farm equipment to be driven on the interstate highway. The permit fee has been amended to \$25 per year for each piece of equipment that must be moved on the interstate per the request of the Agriculture Commissioner. A vehicle shall follow the farm equipment with their hazard lights flashing.

This is a compromise bill that allows for the movement of farm machinery on the interstate highway system in North Dakota while also providing for a minimum speed limit of 40 mph.

A fine for operating farm equipment on the interstate highway without a permit is set at \$200.

A fine for leaving debris on the interstate highway is \$100 per occurrence.

The fiscal note includes either static signs (option 1) or dynamic signs (option 2).

Option 1: \$180,000 for 216 80 mph signs and \$750,000 for 216 40 mph signs plus supports and installation.

Option 2: \$5,400,000 for variable digital signs, wiring, and installation. Costs of operation are \$466,000 per biennium.

It is my opinion that variable digital signs are not needed at the expense noted. While I understand the \$180,000 cost for the 216 80 mph signs and installation, it is difficult to understand the costs of the 40 mph signs not being \$180,000 and the supports being an additional cost of \$570,000 including installation. Nonetheless, that is the fiscal note provided by ND DOT.

This bill provides for objections in the past by including a speed limit minimum and a waiver to limit the impact on our ag producers.