



## WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AMENDMENT MEMO

**2013 Assembly Bill 389**

**Assembly Substitute  
Amendment 1**

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### **2013 Assembly Bill 389**

2013 Assembly Bill 389 increases the maximum speed limit on freeways and expressways from 65 miles per hour to 70 miles per hour. This speed limit takes effect when the Department of Transportation (DOT) posts the new limit by official traffic signs. The bill requires DOT to post the new 70 miles per hour speed limit on specified freeway and expressway segments no later than the first day of the second month beginning after publication. DOT must post the new speed limit on all other freeways and expressways no later than the first day of the seventh month beginning after publication.

Under the bill, if DOT determines, on the basis of an engineering and traffic investigation, that the fixed speed limit of 70 miles per hour is greater than is reasonable or safe with respect to a particular portion of freeway or expressway, DOT may notify the Joint Committee on Finance (JCF) in writing of the proposed lower speed limit. DOT may only implement the proposed lower speed limit if JCF expressly approves the proposed speed limit or passively approves the proposed speed limit by failing to schedule a meeting for the purpose of reviewing the proposed speed limit within 14 working days after the date of DOT's notification.

In addition, the bill changes the definition of "freeway" and "expressway." The bill defines "freeway" as a state trunk highway that, as determined by DOT, has four or more lanes of traffic physically separated by a median or barrier and that gives preference to through traffic by limiting access to interchanges only. The bill defines "expressway" as a state trunk highway that, as determined by DOT, has four or more lanes of traffic physically separated by a median or barrier and that gives preference to through traffic by allowing only some at-grade access to roads and driveways.

### **Substitute Amendment 1**

The substitute amendment increases the maximum speed limit on freeways and expressways that are interstate highways from 65 miles per hour to 70 miles per hour. This speed limit takes effect when DOT posts the new limit by official traffic signs, which it is required to do no later than the first day of

the seventh month beginning after publication. The substitute amendment makes the same changes as the bill to the definition of “expressway” and “freeway.”

The substitute amendment also requires DOT to prepare a report regarding the suitability of a speed limit of 70 miles per hour on freeways and expressways that are not interstate highways. The report must be submitted to the appropriate standing committees of the Legislature within one year of the substitute amendment’s effective date.

**Bill History**

Representative Tittl offered Assembly Substitute Amendment 1 to 2013 Assembly Bill 389 on October 3, 2013. On October 8, 2013, the Assembly Committee on Transportation unanimously voted to recommend adoption of Assembly Substitute Amendment 1. On the same day, the Assembly Committee on Transportation voted to recommend passage of Assembly Bill 389, as amended, on a vote of Ayes, 9; Noes, 6.

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