



April 24, 2025

The Honorable Bob Ferguson
Governor of Washington
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Governor Ferguson:

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates), an alliance of consumer, safety, medical, public health and law enforcement groups and insurance companies working together to pass highway and auto safety laws that prevent crashes, save lives, reduce injuries, and contain costs, requests you to sign into law House Bill (HB) 1596 to establish an intelligent speed assistance (ISA) program for certain reckless driving and excessive speeding offenders. Installation of an ISA device by program participants would be a condition to drive during license suspension to prevent speeding. The ISA requirement is an alternative to license suspension which still allows driving for daily tasks. This safety upgrade is critical and timely.

Traffic fatalities are rising in Washington, and speeding is a major contributor. In 2023, Washington recorded the most traffic fatalities since 1990.ⁱ Speeding accounted for nearly a third (31 percent) of all traffic fatalities. Moreover, speeding related fatalities increased 56 percent from 2014-2023.ⁱⁱ In addition to being tragic, these preventable deaths are costly. Washington incurred \$6.3 billion in economic damage due to motor vehicle crashes which is equivalent to an annual “crash tax” of \$832 per resident according to a 2019 analysis.ⁱⁱⁱ When updated for inflation alone, in 2025, costs would equate to \$8 billion and \$1,050 respectively.^{iv}

ISA is technology that identifies the speed limit and, if necessary, restricts the speed of vehicles exceeding the specified threshold. A recent study on an ISA pilot program in New York City showed ISA produced a 64 percent reduction in overall speeding and an 82 percent decrease on high-speed roads.^v Due to the program’s success, it is now being significantly expanded.^{vi}

This technology is urgently needed because excess speed contributes to both the frequency and severity of motor vehicle crashes and proves especially dangerous for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, bicyclists and roadside first responders who lack the protective structure of a vehicle. Small increases in speed cause serious declines in safety. The average risk of death for a pedestrian is 10 percent at an impact speed of 23 mph, 25 percent at 32 mph, and 50 percent at 42 mph.^{vii} Vehicle occupants suffer its impacts as well, crash tests showed that modest five to 10 mile-per-hour (mph) increases in speed can have a severe impact on a driver’s risk of injury or death.^{viii}

HB 1596 will improve safety and better protect all Washington road users while curbing related costs. We urge you to sign the measure and save lives.

Sincerely,

Catherine Chase, President

ⁱ WTSC. (2024, May 13). *Washington Traffic Deaths Reach 33-Year High* (press release) available [here](#).

ⁱⁱ State Traffic Safety Information for Washington (2023), NHTSA, available at <https://cdan.dot.gov/STSI/stsi.htm>.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2019, NHTSA, Feb. 2023, DOT HS 813 403, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813403>.

^{iv} CPI Inflation Calculator, BLS, Jan. 2019 to Jan. 2025, available at <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>.

- v New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services. (2024, October 30). DCAS & U.S. DOT Volpe Announce Municipal Speeding Reduction of 64% in New Report on Intelligent Speed Assistance [Press release] available [here](#).
- vi Ibid.
- vii Impact Speed and a Pedestrian's Risk of Severe Injury or Death, AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, Sep. 2011., available at <https://aaaafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/2011PedestrianRiskVsSpeedReport.pdf>.
- viii Impact of Speeds on Drivers and Vehicles – Results from Crash Tests, AAA Foundation for Safety, Humanetics, and IIHS, Jan. 2021, available at <https://www.iihs.org/api/datastoredocument/bibliography/2218>.