

Date of Hearing: April 1, 2024

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION  
Lori D. Wilson, Chair  
AB 3069 (Vince Fong) – As Introduced February 16, 2024

**SUBJECT:** Local distance and speed signage

**SUMMARY:** Repeals the law authorizing local governments to place and maintain speed limit, speed advisory, and mileage signs using both common standards of measures and the metric system authorized by Congress and instead only authorizes them to maintain metric signs after January 1, 2025.

**EXISTING LAW:**

Authorizes a local authority in their respective jurisdiction to place and maintain, or cause to be placed and maintained, speed limit, speed advisory, and mileage signs, or suitable plates affixed to or near existing signs, which indicate speeds and distances both in common standards of measures and in measures of the metric system authorized by Congress. (Vehicle Code Section (VEH) 21351.2)

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown

**COMMENTS:**

The imperial system of units, a unit of measurement of the British Imperial System, was the traditional system of weights and measures used officially in Great Britain from 1824 until the adoption of the metric system in 1965. The United States Customary System of weights and measures is derived from the imperial system. According to the United States Metric Association, the United States is the only country in the world that has not adopted the metric system.

The United Kingdom, like the United States, still uses speed limit signs using the British imperial system (miles per hour [mph]) instead of the standard metric system (kilometers per hour [kph]).

While the standard speed limit sign in California uses mph, California law authorizes local governments to place and maintain signs indicating speed in both mph and kph.

*According to the author*, “AB 3069 will ensure that across California, our roadway speed limit signage is uniform and clearly shows United States Customary Units. It does not require signs that are already in metric units to be taken down. New signs must employ United States Customary units. It is therefore necessary to update this outdated rule and enhance the clarity of the California Vehicle Code to explicitly repeal the use of metric signage. AB 3069 will reduce confusion and collisions due to speed limit and other roadway sign discrepancies.”

The California Manual for Traffic Control Devices, reflecting state law, currently permits dual units for speed limits on signs to be placed on local streets and roads using both metric and imperial units, the author’s office has only been able to locate one such sign with certainty in California, which is located at the University of California, Santa Barbara campus.

Signs containing both mph and kph may be dangerous and could lead to confusion as to what the actual speed limit is. American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials has noted that drivers' reaction times increase as a function of decision complexity and the amount of information to be processed. The longer the reaction time, the greater the chance for errors.

According to the report *Driver's Cognitive Workload and Driving Performance under Traffic Sign Information Exposure in Complex Environments: A Cause Study of the Highways in China*, "Complex traffic situations and high driving workload are the leading contributing factors to traffic crashes. There is a strong correlation between driving performance and driving workload." The study revealed that workload is highly related to the amount of information on traffic signs and reaction time increases with the information grade. According to the study, "Information volume (secondary task workload) significantly influenced driving speed and lane deviation, which indicates that driving workload affects driving performance and exceeding workloads would cause driving performance impairment."

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

**Support**

None on file

**Opposition**

None on file

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