



## *News from the* **Ohio Turnpike Commission**

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### **Commission votes to increase speed limit on the Ohio Turnpike**

**Berea, Ohio** – During the Ohio Turnpike Commission meeting this morning, members voted and approved a resolution to increase the speed limit on the Ohio Turnpike from 65 mph to 70 mph for all vehicles.

The increased speed limit idea was proposed at the November Commission meeting by Member Ed Kidston. Since that time, Turnpike staff had been gathering information concerning speed limits in other states and the impact of an increase on traffic and safety. The materials were presented to the Commission members for consideration, and after further review and discussion, the vote was 4 to 1 in favor of the resolution.

“The idea of moving traffic onto the Ohio Turnpike and off of the rural, parallel routes is a matter of safety. Designed with gradual curves and gentle grades, the Ohio Turnpike is an interstate, like many others around the country, which can accommodate larger, heavier vehicles traveling at higher speeds,” stated Mr. Kidston. He added, “Currently, there are 26 states in the country with uniform speed limits at or above 70 mph.”

Following the 2004 speed limit increase to 65 mph for all vehicles on the Ohio Turnpike, the long-term data shows that the accident rate involving commercial vehicles *dropped by 6.4%, and more importantly, the fatality rate decreased by 15.3%.*

Statics and data show that accidents can be caused by any number of factors, such as adverse weather, sleepy drivers, and distractions. The Commission was also presented with

information regarding recent speed surveys on the Turnpike which revealed that the average speed of commercial vehicles was only one mile per hour above the posted limit.

Commission Chairman Joseph Balog stated that an increase in traffic would result in an increase in revenue but stressed that the true benefit to more traffic using the Turnpike is safety. He stated, "Time is money for truckers and we anticipate that the increased speed limit on the Ohio Turnpike will encourage commercial vehicles off of the congested, rural, two-lane country roads and onto the safer, well-maintained, well-designed Ohio Turnpike." Mr. Balog added, "We hope to see our safety record maintained and the safety on parallel routes improved."

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