

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 9, 2011

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary
The Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

In December 2009, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) released the 2009 edition of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Several MUTCD provisions related to Minimum Retroreflectivity Levels (Section 2A.08) would create costly burdens for local governments.

Specifically, the replacement of certain regulatory, warning, and post-mounted guide (except street name) signs is required by January 22, 2015. Additionally, the replacement of certain street name signs and overhead guide signs is required by January 22, 2018.

During this time of economic uncertainty, we urge you to prevent unfunded mandates that would require local governments to incur additional unnecessary cost burdens. Many towns have already invested heavily in their existing signage. We have heard from numerous county and town officials that compliance with these mandates will force towns to raise taxes and discontinue more urgent projects which have already been initiated.

Some local officials estimate that signs meeting the new retroreflectivity levels mandated by the MUTCD can be twice as expensive, per square foot, as the current signs. During a time of strained state, county, and local budgets, and increased demand for social services, this is not an effective use of time, money, and resources.

While we support the goal of making our roads safer, unique street signs have long been a part of town heritage, and signage within towns has traditionally been within the purview of state and local authorities.

Mr. Secretary, even you have stated that this regulation “makes no sense” and that it “does not properly take into account the high costs that local governments would have to bear.” We agree. In light of your comments, we strongly encourage you to reconsider these regulations as quickly and expeditiously as possible.

We look forward to your response to the concerns outlined above.

Sincerely,



Nan Hayworth, M.B.
Member of Congress

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