

Governor Quinn Signs New Speed Limit Law for Rural Highways

Written by Brooke Anderson
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New Law Increases Speed Limit to 70 mph on Rural Four-Lane Highways, Lowers Excessive Speed Limit to Promote Safety

CHICAGO – Governor Pat Quinn today signed a new law to increase the speed limit from 65 to 70 miles-per-hour (mph) on rural four-lane highways, and to lower the limit by five mph for excessive speeding. The law will bring Illinois' speed limit in line with 36 other states that have speed limits of 70 mph or higher on some portion of their roadways, including other large states such as California, Florida, Texas and Ohio, and neighboring states such as Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, Iowa and Michigan. The bill passed with significant bipartisan support in both chambers.

“This limited five miles-per-hour increase will bring Illinois' rural interstate speed limits in line with our neighbors and the majority of states across America, while preventing an increase in excessive speeding,” Governor Quinn said. “I encourage all motorists to continue to respect our traffic laws, avoid distractions and exercise common sense behind the wheel to protect the safety of themselves and others.”

Sponsored by State Senator Jim Oberweis (R-Sugar Grove) and State Representative Jerry Costello Jr. (D-Smithton), Senate Bill 2356 increases the maximum speed limit from 65 to 70 mph on four-lane divided highways outside of urban areas. The law allows Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, Madison, McHenry, St. Clair and Will Counties to opt-out by adopting an ordinance that sets a lower maximum speed limit, empowering counties to make adjustments based on their own local needs.

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The new law also includes an additional safety provision, which lowers the limit by five mph at which drivers may be charged by law enforcement with excessive speeding. Currently, the threshold for penalties is 31 mph over the limit. The new law lowers that threshold to 26 mph over the limit to increase safety on Illinois roads.

The law is effective January 1, 2014.

Illinois joins 36 other states with speed limits of 70 mph or higher, including Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

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