

Senate Transportation Committee

Vivian Hall 271-3091

SB 559-FN, reducing the minimum allowable speed limit on locally controlled roads.

Hearing Date: January 20, 2026

Time Opened: 3:41 p.m.

Time Closed: 3:48 p.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Ricciardi, McConkey, Ward, Prentiss and Fenton

Members of the Committee Absent : None

Bill Analysis: This bill reduces the minimum speed limits that local authorities may set in certain districts from 25 miles per hour to 20 miles per hour, based on engineering or traffic investigations.

Sponsors:

Sen. Ricciardi

Sen. Rosenwald

Sen. Pearl

Sen. Watters

Sen. Fenton

Sen. Lang

Sen. Abbas

Sen. Birdsell

Sen. Innis

Sen. Rochefort

Rep. Miller

Rep. Kuttub

Rep. Rombeau

Who supports the bill: Senator Denise Ricciardi, Senate District 9; Brodie Deshaies, Legislative Advocate, New Hampshire Municipal Association; Paul Susca, Bicycle-Walk Alliance of New Hampshire; Eric Leaver; Benjamin Hodson; Michael Frank; Jeffrey Rodgers, and Karen Sebastian.

Who opposes the bill: None.

Who is neutral on the bill: Bill Lambert, New Hampshire Department of Transportation.

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Senator Ricciardi, Senate District 9

- Senate Bill 559 FN proposes reducing minimum speed limits on local roads in response to rising pedestrian and cyclist fatalities, which have surged nationally and in New Hampshire.

- Faster speeds narrow peripheral vision, reduce reaction time, lengthen stopping distance, and exponentially increase kinetic energy, making serious injury or death more likely.
- The bill would allow municipalities to reduce speed limits from 25 to 20 mph on locally controlled roads after a traffic engineering study, without mandating changes, giving towns flexibility to enhance safety.
- Modest speed reductions slightly extend travel time (~2 minutes on a 40-minute trip), may reduce congestion, and significantly lower pedestrian and cyclist fatalities (from 45% at 30 mph to 5% at 20 mph).

Neutral Information Presented:

Bill Lambert, New Hampshire Department of Transportation

- The Department of Transportation does not have a position on SB 559-FN.
- The bill does not define “urban” or reference established definitions like urban residence districts or urban compacts, leaving its meaning open to interpretation.

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Date Hearing Report completed: January 23, 2026