

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2309

January 10, 2011

Victor Mendez
Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Mendez:

I am writing to express concern about the FHWA Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) requirements regarding retroreflectivity and lettering for road signs. The current rule requires states to have all signs replaced by 2018, amounting to a costly unfunded mandate for the state of Minnesota. I urge you to reconsider this rule to provide states with more flexibility in meeting these safety requirements.

Minnesota takes road safety seriously. In response to the new retroreflectivity standards, the state has implemented an eight-county pilot program to upgrade road signs. However, because the new MUTCD lettering standards were announced after the pilot project, many signs in those counties would have to be replaced again. The Minnesota Department of Transportation estimates that it would cost an additional \$55 to \$76 million to meet the new MUTCD requirements across the state.

I ask that you revise the MUTCD requirements to ease the burden on states like Minnesota, which have made a good faith effort to meet MUTCD requirements. At minimum, FHWA should provide more flexibility in meeting the 2018 deadline and make additional funds available to assist local governments with the costs of meeting these requirements. I am confident that it is possible to craft the MUTCD requirements to effectively promote passenger safety without placing an infeasible mandate on states.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Al Franken", written over a horizontal line.

Al Franken
United States Senator