June 27, 2016

MEDIA ADVISORY – Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

VANCOUVER – Members of the media are invited to join Todd Stone, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, for an update on collision statistics throughout B.C., following the adjustments made to speed limits resulting from the 2014 Rural Highway Safety and Speed Review. There will be a technical briefing with power point followed by a minister statement and QA.

Event Date: Tuesday, June 28, 2016

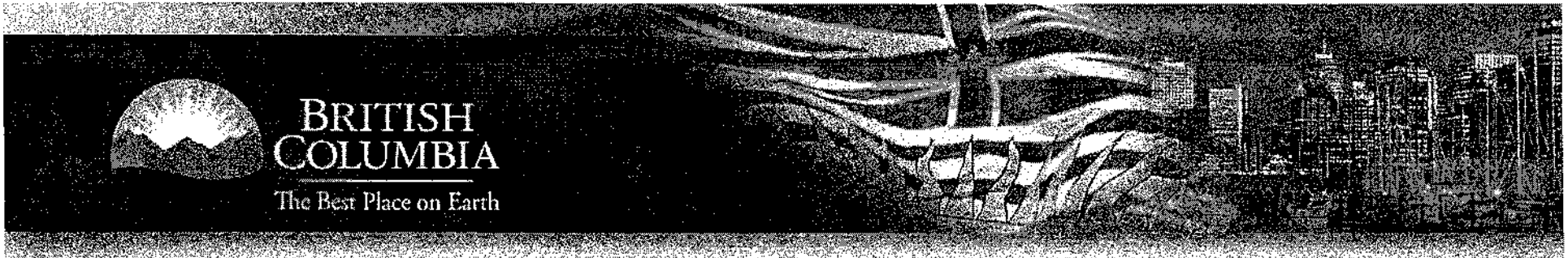
Time: 11 a.m.

Location:
Oceanview room 4
Pan Pacific Hotel
999 Canada Place, Vancouver

Special Instructions:
Media who are unable to attend this event in person can participate by phone.
Conference call #: 1 877 353-9184
Passcode: 22351#

Media can also follow the power point which will be posted at 11 a.m. tomorrow at:
http://engage.gov.bc.ca/safetyandspeedreview/

Media Contact:
Government Communications and Public Engagement
Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
250 356-8241



Rural Highway Safety and Speed Review

Post Implementation Update

June 28, 2016

Rural Safety and Speed Review Recommendations:

Speed limits

- Increase speed on 1300km of rural highway
- Pilot variable speed limits at three locations

Winter tires

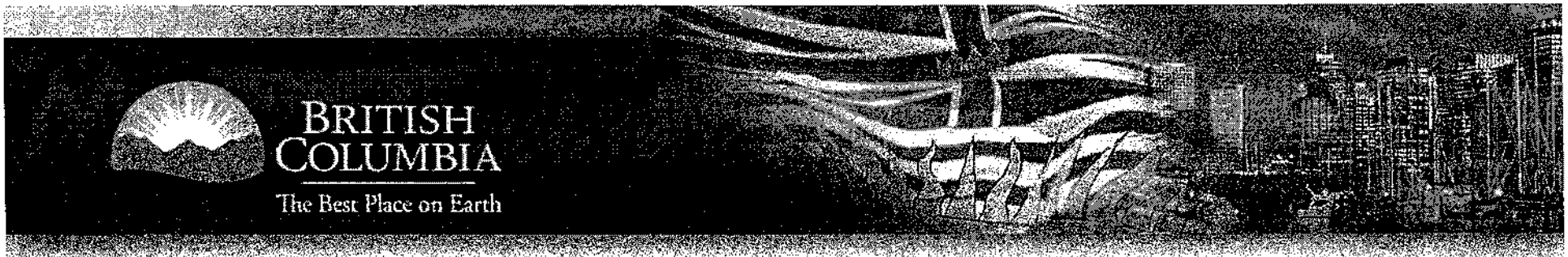
- Update winter tire regulations and post new winter tire signs

Slow moving vehicles

- Introduce new left lane legislation
- Revise pavement markings and signing at passing lanes
- Pilot pullover signing on Highway 4

Wildlife

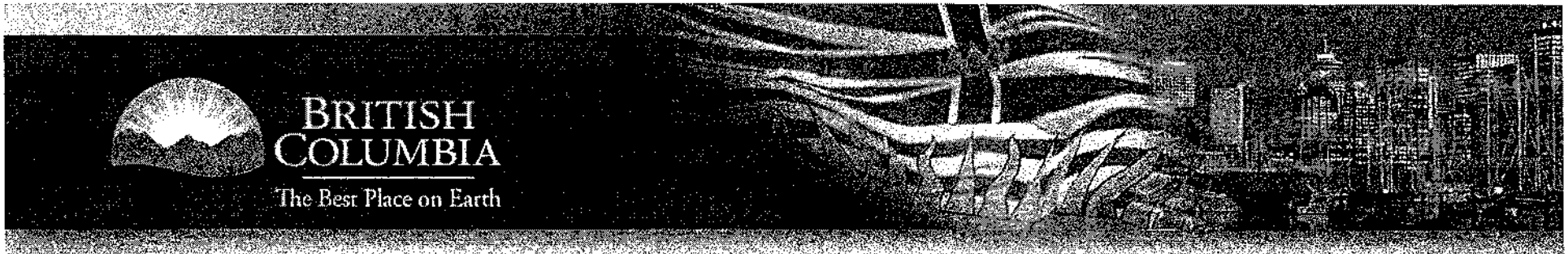
- Implement 2 wildlife detection systems on Highway 3
- Install gateway wildlife signs
- Install LED wildlife signs
- CMS wildlife messaging



Speed Limit Review

- Reviewed over 9,100 km of rural provincial highways
- Assessment based on Institute of Transportation Engineers speed zone practices
  - 85th Percentile
  - Safety history, geometry, land use, consistency
- Increased speed limit to match operating speeds on 33 highway segments (approx 1,300 km)

New Speed Limit km/h	Number of Segments
90	9
100	17
110	4
120	3



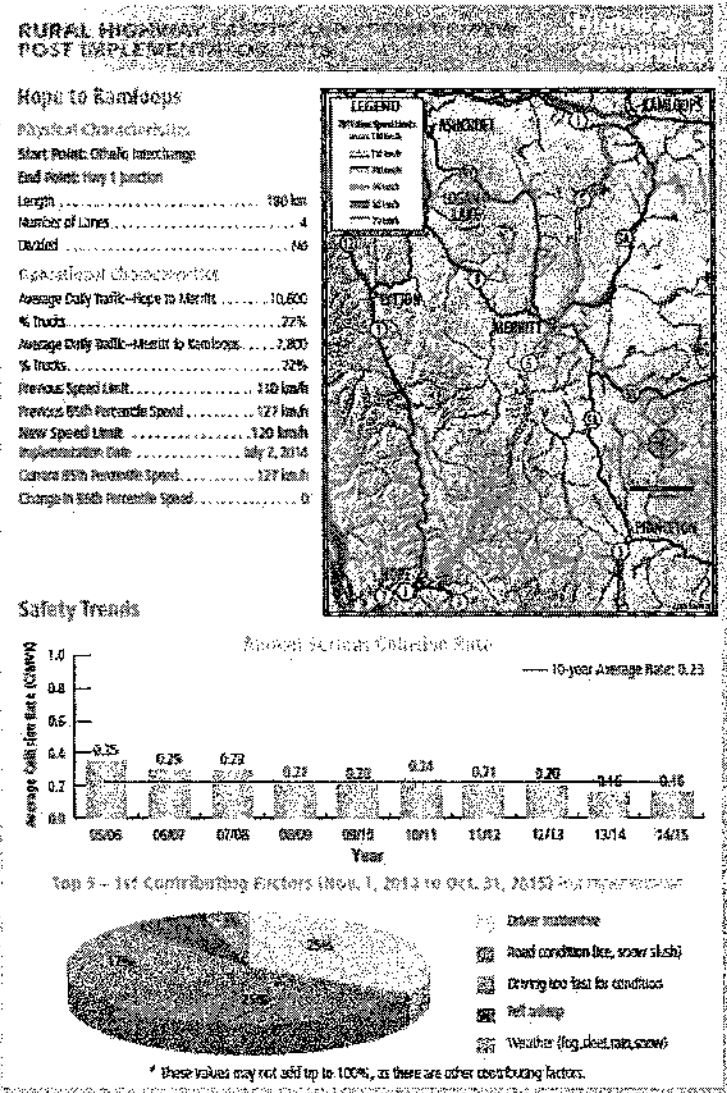
Post Implementation Speed Surveys

- Changes in speeds varied by corridor
  - 14 of the sections had speeds remain the same or decline;
  - 19 saw increased speeds
    - Highway 99 north of Whistler dropped 5 km/h
    - Highway 5 from Hope to Kamloops remained unchanged
    - Highway 5 north of Kamloops increased 9 km/h
  - Average increase was 2 km/h
  - 19 sections were within +- 3 km/h of their pre-implementation 85% speed

BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth

Safety Data Overview

- 1 year post-implementation review (November 1, 2014 to October 31, 2015)
- Serious collisions are reported as a collision rate
  - Traffic volume
  - Section length



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Individual Segments Summary

- Over half of the segments (19 of 33) the collision rate stayed the same or decreased
- Of the 14 sections where crashes increased, speed decreased or stayed the same on 7
- 7 segments had the speed increase, serious collision increase

	Crashes Decreased or no change	Crashes Increased
Speed Increased	12	7
Speed decreased or no change	7	7

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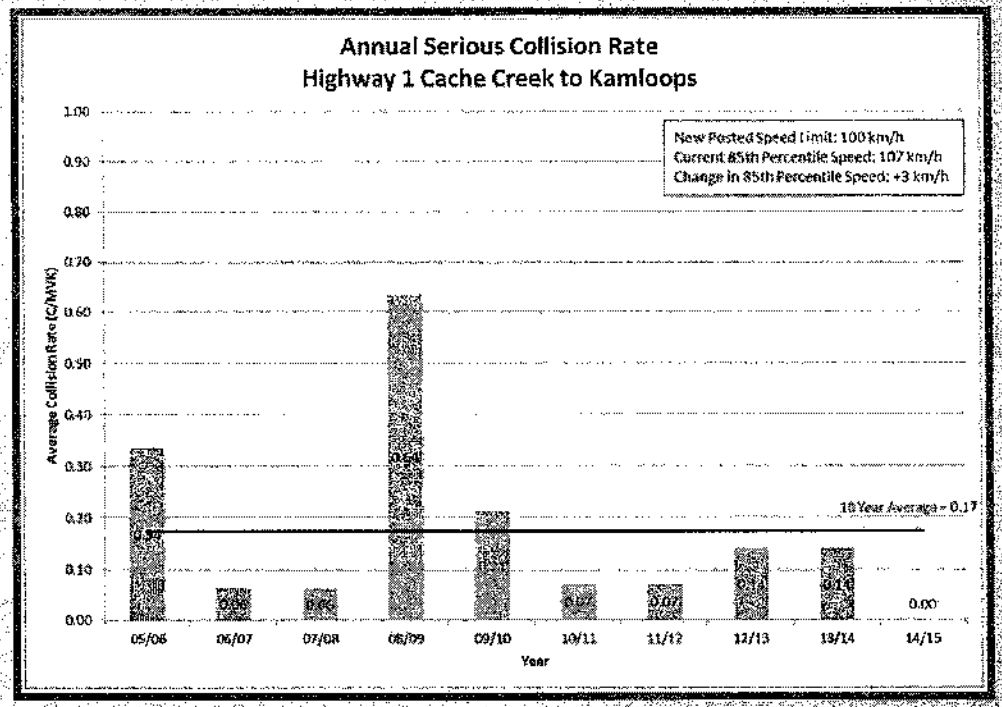
Collision Data Variability

- One year of data does not make a trend
  - Typically 3 years of data are used
- Year to year data can vary significantly
- Factors affecting crashes
  - Number of vehicles on the road
    - Economic activity
    - Price of fuel
  - Weather patterns



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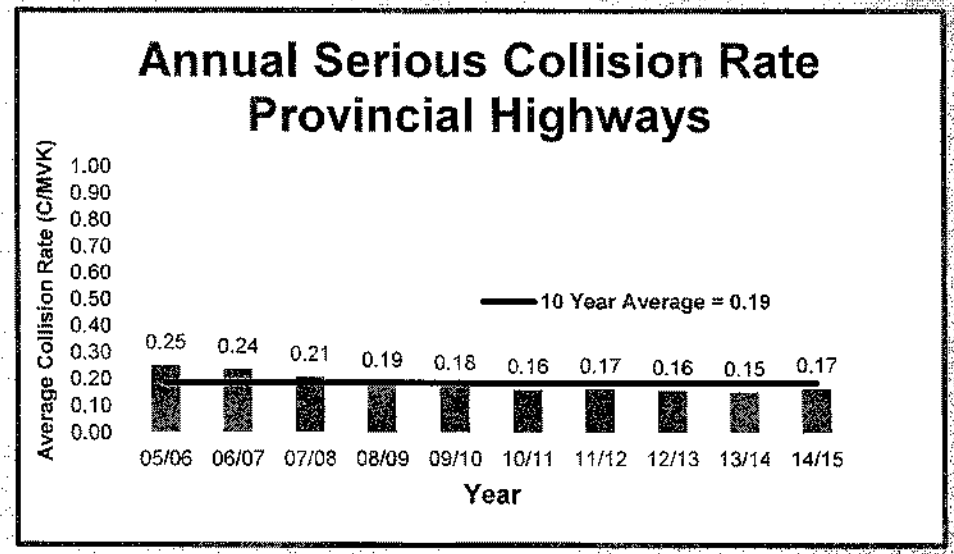
Over-all Safety Data

- 32% reduction in serious collision rate over 10 years
- UBC statistical model estimated 11% over-all increase in segments where the speed was changes
  - Trending down
  - too few crashes to come to segment specific conclusions
- Single year data shows a 9% increase in serious crashes across the whole provincial highway system



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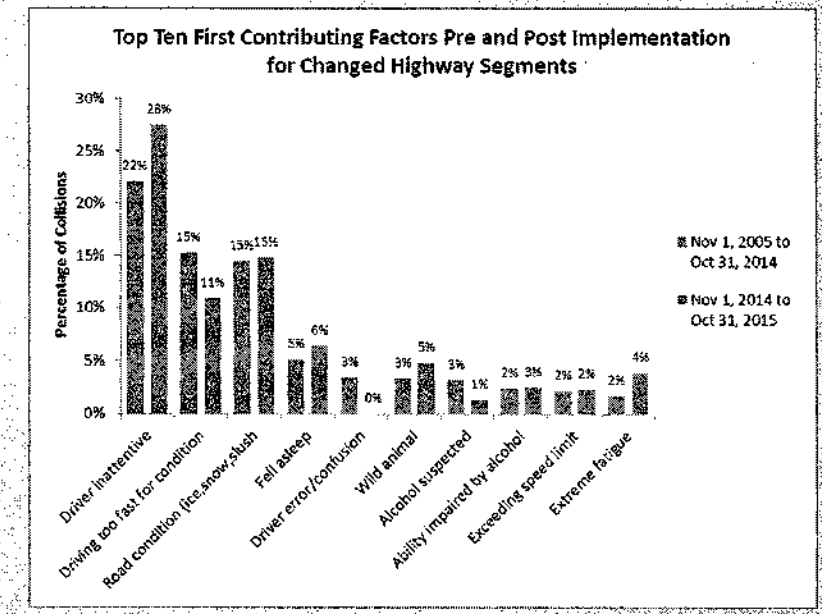
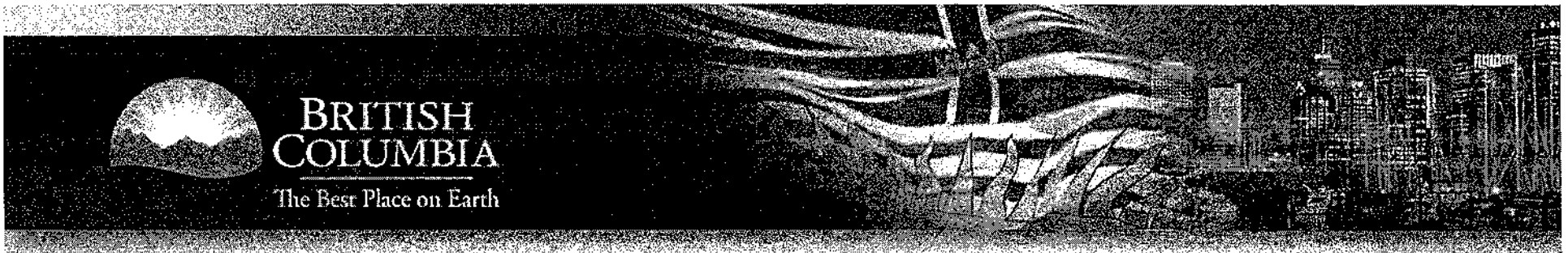
Contributing Factors

- Top 3 contributing factors for all changed segments
  - Driver inattentiveness showed an increase of 6%
  - Driving too fast for conditions showed a decrease of 4%
  - Road conditions remained the same
- Represent 54% of all crashes





Safety Trends in Other Countries

Fatalities in United States

Jan to June 2015

Oregon +59%
Florida +29%
Georgia +26%
Minnesota +26%
Indiana + 23%
North Dakota +22%
South Carolina +21%
California +20%
Louisiana +20%
Maryland +19%
North Carolina +19%
Utah +19%
Wisconsin +19%
Arizona + 18%
Colorado +18%
Ohio +17%
Arkansas +14%
Vermont +12%

Fatalities internationally

United Kingdom +5% (2014)
Sweden +4% (2014)
Australia +2.5% (2015)

Conclusions

- Ministry analysis aligns with UBC statistical modelling
- Operating speeds have not changed significantly
- Driver inattentiveness and Off-road collision types are showing an increase
- Recent changes aimed at improving safety have been implemented
  - 3 New Variable Speed Limit Systems
  - 2 New Wildlife Detection Systems
  - BC On the Move Road Safety Improvements
  - Increased distracted driving penalties

Thank You

Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure
One year of data – Rural Highway Safety and Speed Review
Crash rates or speeds down or unchanged in 26 of 33 new speed zones; Ministry investing in safety improvements

Oceanview Suite 4 - Pan Pacific Hotel
999 Canada Place, Vancouver

Date: **Tuesday, June 28** **Time:** **11:00AM**
Podium: **Yes**

Event Summary: Minister Stone, Norm Parkes and Ed Miska will hold a Technical Briefing in Oceanview room 4 at the Pan Pacific Hotel in Vancouver – 999 Canada Place, Vancouver BC.

Green Room: Atrium Boardroom (just outside of the Oceanview suites)
NOTE: Both the Atrium boardroom and the Oceanview Room 1 are on the "R" level at the Pan Pacific.

Media Relations: Mary Lo (on site) / Parm Bains (media dial in)

Time	Event Itinerary
8:30 AM	Tim Wong and SW AV on site for technical set up
10:00 AM	Mary Lo on site and will go through the run of show with Tim Wong
10:30 AM	**Minister Stone arrives at the "R" level and is greeted by Tim Wong; Minister and staff will proceed to the Atrium Boardroom**
10:35 AM Pre-Brief	**Pre-brief led by Tim Wong with:** - Minister Stone - Norm Parkes, Executive Director, Highway Operations, MOTI - Ed Miska, Executive Director Engineering Services, MOTI
10:55 AM	**Minister Stone and speakers proceed to Oceanview 4** **NOTE:** Minister Stone will position at the podium; Norm Parkes and Ed Miska will positon behind their chairs
11:00 AM	**Minister Stone delivers welcoming remarks and introduces himself and Norm Parkes and Ed Miska who will be leading the technical briefing** **NOTE**: Once remarks are finished, the Minister will return to his seat at the table.
11:05 AM	Norm Parkes and Ed Miska lead the technical briefing - 45min NOTE: The PowerPoint will be displayed on a 65" LCD screen
11:50 AM	Technical briefing concludes. Norm Parkes welcomes the Minister back to the podium for remarks
11:52 AM	**Minister Stone delivers concluding remarks**
11:57 AM	**Media Availability** Moderator: Mary Lo / Parm Bains (media dial in)
12:10 PM	**Event concludes; Minister departs**

Contacts

Media Relations: Mary Lo 604 230-6575 mobile

Event Information / Speaking Notes

Event: Rural Highway Safety and Speed Review – Post Implementation 2015
Date: Tuesday, June 28, 2016
Time: 11 a.m.
Location:
Oceanview room 4
Pan Pacific Hotel
999 Canada Place, Vancouver

Special Instructions:
Media who are unable to attend this event in person can participate by phone.
Conference call #: 1 877 353-9184
Passcode: 22351#

Contact: Tim Wong 778-877-8596 mobile

The Minister should recognize:

- **Norm Parkes, Executive Director, Highway Operations, MOTI**
- **Ed Miska, Executive Director Engineering Services, MOTI**

Room set-up: Podium, mic, backdrop of Ministry logo on projection screen

Audience Size: 20-25 media (approx.)

What the audience wants to hear about:

- Overview of results of Rural Highway Safety and Speed Review
- Key Findings

Speaking Notes

for the

Honourable Todd Stone
Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure and MLA for Kamloops-South Thompson

Rural Highway Safety and Speed Review Update

Tuesday, June 28, 2016
Oceanview room 4
Pan Pacific Hotel
999 Canada Place, Vancouver

Rural Highway Safety and Speed Overview:

- Thank you, Norm Parkes and Ed Miska, for providing the technical overview today on the one year results of our speed limit increases.
- I'd like to say a few words, and then we'll open it up to some questions and answers.

Safety Measures:

- Safety is this ministry's highest priority. It is the most important theme and focus for every project, every new piece of infrastructure or road upgrade.
- Before I get into more details about the findings and our actions, it's important that I highlight some of the important safety improvements we've introduced over the last few years.
- We've invested significantly in new technologies, strengthened our legislation, raised driving penalties and made invested considerably in new and safer highway infrastructure.

Variable speed signs:

- To help reduce the frequency of weather-related crashes, variable speed zone signs have now been installed along three sections of provincial highway where the weather can quickly turn from rain to snow.
- There are 18 variable speed signs covering 40 kilometres along Highway 1 from Perry River to Revelstoke, 13 signs covering 24 kilometres along the Coquihalla from Portia Interchange to the former Toll Plaza and 16 signs covering 40 kilometres along the Sea to Sky from Squamish to Function Junction.
- Traffic, pavement and visibility sensors are monitoring real-time traffic speeds and road and weather conditions to provide recommended reduced speeds back to operations staff.
- The data being gathered is being used to continuously update the electronic speed limit signs to help ensure people are driving according to the current road conditions to help people reach their destination safely.

Wildlife safety initiatives:

- The ministry has installed two new high-tech wildlife detection systems on Highway 3 between Cranbrook and the Alberta border to warn motorists if a large animal is coming towards the highway. When large wildlife are approaching the road, sensors trigger flashing lights on a warning sign to tell drivers to slow down and help them avoid hitting the animal.
- Results so far show that large animals are present near the highway six to eight hours a day.
- The ministry continues to install new segments of wildlife exclusion fencing to protect motorists and wildlife. In total, more than 500 km of wildlife exclusion fencing is in place on Highway 1, 5, 19, 97, and 97C. It's estimated that a well-built wildlife exclusion fence can reduce the potential for wildlife collisions by more than 90%.
- The ministry continues to build new wildlife passes, to enable animals to get from one side of the highway to the other side safely. In total, the ministry has constructed 4 wildlife overpasses, 29 large wildlife underpasses and over 70 small underpasses.

- The ministry has increased the number of flashing LED wildlife warning signs.

Winter tires updated regulations:

- Almost 400 new signs have been posted at the corridors in B.C. that require winter tires, to remind motorists that they must have their vehicles equipped with winter tires on these routes.
- Winter tires must be in good condition with a minimum tread depth of 3.5 mm.
- Winter tires for cars and light trucks have now been defined as those labelled with either the Mountain Snowflake symbol or the Mud and Snow (M+S) designation.
- Large commercial vehicles that are 27,000 kg gross vehicle weight (GVW) and greater, such as tractor trailers, are required to carry chains on the designated routes.
- The ministry has ensured considerable outreach to the public and the media to clarify the new winter tire regulations through news releases, social media, and Tran BC, to help raise awareness levels about the need for winter tires on certain routes.

Keep Right Except to Pass:

- The ministry introduced the Motor Vehicle Amendment Act 2015 to make the language clearer and to make it easier for police to ticket drivers who drive slowly in the left lane and who don't move over to the right.
- This change was made to remind everyone that driving slowly in the left lane and not moving over is unsafe driving behaviour and can lead to more crashes.
- The legislation clarifies that drivers are to travel in the right lane unless they are passing another vehicle, moving left to allow traffic to merge, preparing for a left hand turn, or moving left to pass an official vehicle displaying a flashing light.
- The ministry has installed improved about 300 Keep Right signs along B.C. highways, to emphasize that drivers need to move over to the right to let others pass.

Legislative changes and penalties:

- Increased fines and points for distracted driving
    - Base fine increased from $167 to $368.
    - The number of penalty points per infraction is now four (up from three).
    - First-time offenders face a minimum $543 in financial penalties with ICBC penalty points.
    - Repeat offenders, upon a second offence within 12 months will pay the $368 fine plus $520 for a total of $888 in financial penalties, which escalate further for any additional offence.
    - Repeat offenders will have their driving record subject to automatic review, which could result in a three-to-12 month driving prohibition.
- Vehicle impoundment for excessive speeding (40 km/h over speed limit)
    - $368 fine and 3 points
- Immediate roadside suspension for impaired driving - penalties begin at 0.05 BAC.
    - 3 days for over 0.05 BAC for first offence
    - 90 days for over 0.08 BAC

- Left lane law to reduce aggressive driving
    - $167 fine and 3 points
- Slow Down Move Over to improve safety for roadside workers and law enforcement
    - $173 and 3 points

Highway safety improvements

- Over the fifteen years, we have made significant investments in highway safety improvements.
- $18-billion on transportation improvements by the B.C. government and its partners since 2001.
- This significant investment includes:
    - More than 190 km of new four and six lane highway segments.
    - More than 500 bridges repaired or replaced.
    - More than 400 intersections upgraded.
    - More than 27 new interchanges
    - More than 33 new passing lanes on rural highways
    - More than 6,700 km of rumble strips
    - More than 18,500 km of repaving
    - More than 3,100 km of side roads repaired
- Through B.C. on the Move –our 10 year transportation plan – we will invest up to $2.7 billion over three years to improve our transportation network.

UBC report:

- In 2014, we undertook a review of the speed and safety of our rural highway system, which looked at the posted speed, wildlife collisions, winter tire requirements & how to deal with slow moving traffic.
- As a result of this review, we introduced many of the new technology improvements I just referenced and made a number of changes to strengthen legislation and make our highways safer.
- And we introduced speed limit changes on 33 segments of highways across the province, outside of Northern British Columbia
- The new speed limits were put in place by November, 2014.
- We committed to reporting out on the changes – and acting on the data.
- Last November, the ministry commissioned statistical modelling by UBC researchers to assess the first year's collision data and look specifically at the sections of highways where the speed limits increased.
- The researchers concluded that there was not enough data in a single year to develop a statistically significant trend for individual highway segments.
- This kind of fluctuation in such small numbers makes it very difficult to analyze year-to-year for any particular change.
- In addition, a trend study typically looks at three years before and three years after a change is made.

- However, he was able to determine using a theoretical model that the increase in crashes for all segments was up by an average of 11% in the first year.
- As Norm and Ed pointed out – the 11% average increase on the highways where speed limits were increased is consistent with the 9% average increase the province saw on all other B.C. highways where the speed limits were not raised.
- Last year's increase in crashes is unusual in context with the downward trend we've been seeing on highways in B.C. over the last 10 years – so it's important to put this into context with what we're seeing in other jurisdictions.

Other jurisdictions:

- As I noted, we need to look at rates over time to get a real sense of what is happening on our highways, as crash rates and average speeds fluctuate every year in jurisdictions around the world.
- Crash rates and fatality rates have recently risen in places where speed limits have remained unchanged, as more people take to the road with lower gas prices and as distracted driving rates continue to climb.
- For example:
    - Sweden - known for having some of the safest roads in the world - experienced a 4% increase in the number of fatalities in 2014.
    - In the first six months of 2015 motor-vehicle deaths have increased 14% overall in the United States.
    - In fact, during this period, 18 American States saw increases greater than the rate in B.C. This includes:
        - Arizona – up 18%
        - California – up 20 %
        - Florida – up 29%
        - Oregon – up 59%

Contributing factors:

- The spike in crashes outside of B.C. and the variation in results on our own highways – 9% crash increase on sections without speed limit increases – confirms that there are many factors that can contribute to crashes.
- And it's important that we look at the increasing crash rate in this context.
- With the lower gas price and higher US dollar, for example, traffic volumes on some major highways are rising:
    - Abbotsford to Hope is up 3.4%
    - Coquihalla is up 4.1%
    - Highway 1 – Salmon Arm to Revelstoke is up 3.1% and Revelstoke to Golden is up 3.6%.
    - Sea to Sky is up nearly 3%.
- In addition, while speed can be a factor in crashes – changing weather conditions, distracted driving, driving too fast for conditions, heavy traffic, falling asleep, alcohol, driver error and wild animals can all contribute to crashes.

- And the data we're releasing today shows that distracted driving, road conditions, and driving too fast for conditions contributed to 54% of serious crashes where speed limits changed.
- In fact, the 2015 data shows that distracted driving – also called driver inattentiveness – is still on the rise on these sections of highway.
- Between November 1, 2014 and October 31, 2015, 28% of all crashes in these areas were primarily caused by distracted driving.
- Distracted driving was the primary cause of 22% of crashes during the previous 10 years.
- Driving faster than the posted speed limit was a contributing factor in only 2% of the crashes.
- Important takeaway -- we continue to see a rising number of people being killed or injured while using their phones and driving a vehicle. A text message, a phone call, a Facebook post is not worth your or someone else's life.

Ministry review – Speed and Safety:

- So where do we go with this information?
- Over the last six months, ministry engineers took a close look at the first year of speed and crash data for each section of highway where the speed limits were changed.
- Our analysis went further than the UBC researchers summary level modelling because we needed section-by-section information to help us make decisions about each segment.
- Ministry engineers looked at the crash data from Nov., 2014 when we introduced the new speed limits to Oct. 31, 2015 and compared it with crash data from the previous three years.
- They then broke the information down by each of the 33 segments of highways.
- Data shows:
    - 19/33 segments = same or decreased number of collisions
    - 7 segments = reduced 85th percentile, yet higher number of collisions - so something other than the increased speed limits is going on in these segments as people are driving slower on these sections of highway compared to before the speed limits were raised.
    - 7 segments = higher 85th percentile and higher collisions. These segments are our focus for mitigation measures.
- They also looked at speeds on highways adjacent to the highways where speed limits went up.
- There were huge variability in 85th percentile on both highways where speeds increased, as well as on highways where speeds not increased (including all northern highways)
        - IE – Highway 16 Prince George to Vanderhoof – speed limits have not changed but the traveling speed is up by 6 km/hr from 2013. And on Highway 1 from Kamloops to Salmon Arm (Hilltop to Tappen with no speed limit changes, the speed has increased by 7 km/hr.
- Importantly, and why it makes it challenging from a statistical perspective – there are some minor fluctuations in the number of crashes that contribute to huge shifts in crash rates.
- For example:
    - On Highway 97 Cache Creek to Hundred Mile House, there were 3 serious crashes in 2015 and 12 in 2014 – a 75% decrease in one year.
    - On Highway 97A Grindrod to Sicamous, we saw 16 crashes in 2012, dropping to 7 in 2013 – an over 55% decrease.

Actions:

- The findings in the reports highlight some of the challenges and complexities of looking at this data for only one year from a statistical perspective.
- We really need at least three years of data to establish a trend – and sometimes much longer on very small volume routes.
- However, safety will always be the priority for this ministry and guides every one of our decisions.
- Out of an abundance of caution, we will be introducing new safety features and making adjustments where needed on sections of highway where the crash rates have increased.
- On the 14 sections where the crash rate has increased, we're investing in added safety features like improved road markings, better signage, new rumble strips, variable speed signs and wildlife safety measures.
- This includes safety improvements to the seven sections where speeds actually decreased and crashes increased after we changed the speed limits.
    - For example, since we believe that congestion and large fluctuations of volumes are the root cause of many collisions on Highway 1 from Abbotsford (Whatcom) to Hope, we will be installing variable speed signs on this stretch of highway in the next 12 to 18 months.
    - We will also be installing variable speed signs on Highway 3 between Hope and the Coquihalla in the next 12 to 18 months, because of the volume of traffic on this stretch of highways and two of the major contributors to crashes relate to winter driving and tires.
    - On the stretch of Highway 1 between Kamloops and Salmon Arm, we're continuing our aggressive four-laning program, which will reduce crashes from improper turning; invest in new centerline rumble strips to wake distracted drivers up; and install new wildlife signs to warn drivers of wildlife areas. All of these improvements address factors that contributed to crashes in this area last year.
    - On the island – Cowichan Bay to Nanaimo – the largest contributor to crashes was driver inattentiveness – particularly at intersections. The ministry will be improving access at Cowichan Bay Road, and reviewing signal operations at intersections along the route.
    - On the Okanagan Connector (Highway 97C Aspen Grove to Peachland), road conditions were the largest contributing factor to crashes, as the weather can change very quickly along the corridor. Frequently, we will see sunshine in the Okanagan valley and snow up on the summit. We will be installing dynamic message boards at the Pennask Summit and Brenda Mine that will alert drivers to changing road conditions.
- We will do this work over the next 12 to 18 months.
- And when we introduced the speed changes in 2014, I committed that if any of the zones show an increase in collisions, and we can't reduce them with engineering measures, the ministry would readjust the speeds.
- We looked long and hard at two segments that saw an increase in speed and an increase in the collision rate – Highway 1 from Hope to Cache Creek and on Highway 5A from Princeton to Merritt.

- The ministry has determined that there are no cost-effective engineering measures available to maximize the likelihood of reducing the collision rate, so we have decided to immediately roll back the speed limit changes on these two sections of highway.
    - Highway 1 from Hope to Cache Creek – will be rolled back to 90 km/hr
    - Highway 5A from Princeton to Merritt – will be rolled back to 80 km/hr

Conclusion:

- Safety is this ministry's highest priority. It is the most important lens that we look through with respect to every infrastructure project we build, and every regulatory and policy change we consider.
- We have committed to keeping a close eye on each section of highway where we increased speed limits.
- That will continue as we remain committed on our goal to have the safest roads in North America.
- Thank you. Now, I will take your questions.

-30-

Questions and Answers
Rural Highway Safety and Speed review – one year update
June 26, 2016

- **Our ministry is committed to making our roads and highways as safe as possible.**
- **That's why we undertook a review of the speed and safety of our rural highway system in 2014 which looked at the posted speed, wildlife collisions, winter tire requirements & how to deal with slow moving traffic.**
- **We introduced new technologies, strengthened legislation, raised driving penalties, and increased speed limits on 33 sections of highways based on a detailed engineering review of each section.**
- **Ministry engineers have spent the last six months taking a close look at the first year of speed and crash data for each section of highway where we increased speed limits.**
- **We've seen the crash rate drop or remain unchanged on 19 of 33 sections of highway where the limits were increased.**
- **We also saw the crash rate go up on 14 segments of highway. However, on seven of these segments, travelers were actually driving at slower speeds than before the speed limits increased.**
- **This is why we need to look at speed limit changes over time – to identify and properly evaluate trends that appear – rather than year-to-year fluctuations.**
- **In fact, crash rates and fatality rates have recently risen in jurisdictions across the world where speed limits have remained unchanged, as more people take to the road with lower gas prices and as distracted driving rates continue to climb.**
    - **Oregon, for example, has experienced a 59% spike in the number of fatalities in the first six months of 2015. Sweden - known for having some of the safest roads in the world - experienced a 4% increase in the number of fatalities in 2014.**
- **Highway speeds also fluctuate each year regardless of whether speed limits change.**
    - **For example, on Highway 16 Prince George to Vanderhoof, where speed limits haven't changed, the average traveling speed is up by 6km/hour from 2013. Similarly, the speed increased by 7km/hr on Highway 1 from Kamloops to Salmon Arm (Hilltop to Tappen) despite no speed limit changes.**
- **It's also important to note that there are many different factors that can lead to a crash, and speed is only one of them.**

- **Distracted driving, road conditions, and driving too fast for conditions contributed to 54% of serious crashes where speed limits changed.**
- **In saying that, we have committed to taking a reasonable and measured approach based on the corridor-specific data and in the interest of the public's safety.**
- **Out of an abundance of caution, on the 14 sections where the crash rate has increased – including the seven sections where speeds actually dropped – we're investing in added safety features like improved road markings, better signage, new rumble strips, variable speed signs and wildlife safety measures.**
- **And we'll be rolling back the speed limit changes on two sections of highway – Highway 1 from Hope to Cache Creek and on Highway 5A from Princeton to Merritt.**
- **We will continue to monitor the data over the next few years as we continue to make public safety a priority.**

Questions/ Answers - General

1. Are you concerned about the 11% crash rate increase on these segments of highways?

- Our priority is the safety of the traveling public.
- The findings in the reports and the increase crash and fatality rates in other jurisdictions highlight some of the challenges and complexities of looking at this data for only one year.
- Importantly, we saw the number of crashes remain unchanged or drop on the majority of highways where the speed limit changed.
- We also saw the travelling speed drop on seven sections, while the crash rate went up.
- This confirms there are other factors beyond speed contributing to crashes on our highways.
- In fact, distracted driving, road conditions, and driving too fast for conditions contributed to 54% of serious crashes where speed limits changed.
- Out of an abundance of caution, the ministry is acting on the information we've received to date and will be investing in new added safety features like improved road markings, better

signage, new rumble strips, variable speed signs and wildlife safety measures on the 14 sections where the crash rate increased.

- We're also going to reduce the speed limits on two sections of highway - Highway 1 from Hope to Cache Creek and on Highway 5A from Princeton to Merritt – to where they were before the review.
- We will continue to monitor the data over the next few years as we continue to make public safety a priority.

2. What sections have seen the largest crash rate increase and why?

- The largest crash rate increase was on a 7km stretch of Highway 3, from exit 170 to exit 177. Nearly half of the crashes on this stretch of highway were caused by distracted driving.

3. Shouldn't you drop speed limits at all 14 sections where crashes have increased?

- Ministry engineers closely analyzed each section of highway where the speeds were increased.
- On seven of the 14 sections of highway where crashes increased, people were travelling slower than before the speed limits changed.
- Speed is only one of a number of factors that cause crashes. Changing weather conditions, distracted driving, driving too fast for conditions, heavy traffic, falling asleep at the wheel, alcohol, driver error and wild animals can all contribute to crashes.
- In fact, distracted driving, road conditions, and driving too fast for conditions contributed to 54% of serious crashes where speed limits changed.
- On Highway 1 between Abbotsford and Hope, for example, we saw an increase in the number of rear-enders – often caused by congestion, distracted driving or weather conditions.
- This could be addressed by introducing variable speed signs to help control traffic during high-volume periods or in poor weather.

- We're introducing similar corridor-specific safety improvements to address each of the 14 sections of highway where the crash rate increased.
- We will continue to monitor the data over the next few years as we continue to make public safety a priority.

4. Why do you think the crash rate has increased on only some sections of highways?

- The findings in the reports highlight some of the challenges and complexities of looking at this data for only one year.
- For example, we saw the speed that people were travelling drop on seven sections of highway, while the crash rate went up.
- Speed is only one factor that can lead to a crash. In fact, distracted driving, road conditions, and driving too fast for conditions contributed to 54% of serious crashes where speed limits changed.
- This is why we need at least three years of data to establish some kind of trend on these corridors.
- Out of an abundance of caution, we're moving forward with safety improvements where crashes increased.
- On 12 of the 14 sections where the crash rate has increased, we're investing in new corridor-specific safety features like improved road markings, better signage, new rumble strips, variable speed signs and wildlife safety measures.
- We will continue to monitor the data over the next few years as we continue to make public safety a priority.

5. Are there any other countries or states where the crash rate has increased by more than 11% in a year?

- In the first 6 months of 2015 motor-vehicle deaths have increased 14% overall in the US.
- Numerous states have increases greater than 11%:
  - Arizona +18
  - Arkansas +14
  - California +20
  - Colorado +18

- Florida +29
- Georgia +26
- Indiana +23
- Louisiana +20
- Maryland +19
- Minesota +26
- North Carolina +19
- North Dakota +22
- Ohio +17
- Oregon +59
- South Carolina +21
- Utah +19
- Vermont +12
- Virginia +12
- Wisconsin +19

6. Did crash rates go up on the rest of our highways?

- Serious crashes on unchanged segments increased by around 9%, which is fairly consistent with the increase we saw on highways where speed limits increased.

7. How did you come up with the crash rates for each segment?

- In order to look for indications of changes in performance, engineers reviewed serious crash rates on each of the 33 segments of highway where speed limits were changed.
- The post implementation crash rate was compared to the previous year crash rate and the 3 year pre-implementation crash rate.
- This allowed engineers to identify early indications where safety improvements could be made by looking at both the short term variation as well as the year over year differences.
- If the post implementation crash rate was above both the pre-implementation crash rate and the 3 year average pre-implementation crash rate then it was deemed to have increased.

8. Are there specific reasons why you are reducing the speed limits on Highway 1 Hope to Cache Creek?

- The data on Highway 1 Hope to Cache Creek showed traffic was travelling at 5 km an hour higher and a rising crash rate, largely due to distracted driving.
- We looked at a range of engineering safety improvements to address the rising rate.
- In the end, ministry engineers determined that reducing the speed limit on this section is the best solution.

9. Are there specific reasons why you are reducing the speed limits on Highway 5A Princeton to Merritt?

- The data for Highway 5A Princeton to Merritt showed traffic was travelling at 5 km an hour higher and a rising crash rate.
- Again, we looked at a range of engineering safety improvements to address the rising rate.
- In the end, ministry engineers determined that reducing the speed limit on this section is the best solution.

10. Have you ever reduced speed limits before?

- Yes. The province is always open to receiving feedback on speed limits across the province to make our highway network as safe as possible. Two recent examples include:
    - Sicamous – extended the 60 km/h zone on Hwy 1 on the east end of town
    - Central Saanich – reduced the speed on Verdier Avenue approaching the Mill Bay Ferry from 50 km/h to 40 km/h

11. Isn't one additional crash too many?

- Yes. That's why it's important to set the correct speed limit for each section of highway.
- On some highways, a speed limit that's set too low can contribute to reckless driving, excessive speeding and accidents.
- The speed limit changes we made were based on a careful and thorough engineering assessment using speed zoning practices recommended by the Institute of Transportation Engineers and adopted by road authorities throughout North America.
- We've always said we will take a reasonable and measured approach to these changes based on the data and in the interest of the public's safety – to make sure that the speed limits on our highways are as safe as possible.

12. If you're rolling back speed limit increases, wasn't it a mistake to increase them in the first place?

- The speed limit changes we made were based on a careful and thorough engineering assessment using speed zoning practices recommended by the Institute of Transportation Engineers and adopted by road authorities throughout North America.
- On some highways, a speed limit that's set too low can contribute to reckless driving, excessive speeding and accidents.
- Appropriate speed limits promote safety, encourage compliance and reduce speed differences.
- While some researchers have suggested that any increase in speed is unsafe and will result in an increase in serious crashes, others have found no appreciable change in the number of crashes when posted speeds were changed.
- In fact, in B.C. when we changed thousands of kilometres of highway from 90 km/h to 100 km/h in the mid '90's, we saw a reduction in the number of crashes.
- Many of the world leaders in safe roads post speeds that are higher than B.C. For example, Sweden, which has one of the lowest rates of serious crashes in the world, posts their main freeways at 110 to 120 km/h.

- We've always said we will take a reasonable and measured approach to these changes based on the data and in the interest of the public's safety.
- We will continue to use the data we gather to ensure we make good decisions about our highway speed limits.

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- We've always said we will take a reasonable and measured approach to these changes based on the data and in the interest of the public's safety.
- We will continue to use the data we gather to make decisions about our highway speed limits.

14. You made the changes nearly two years ago. Why did it take you so long to prepare and release the data?

- We needed at least a year's worth of data – October 31, 2014 to November 1, 2015 – before we could do any real analysis of crash statistics.
- It also took a few months after November to gather and check that data, as it came from the ministry, the RCMP and ICBC.
- Once we received it, we got to work on this report and released it as soon as it was finished.

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18. What do you say to the families of people who lost loved ones on these highways?

- My heart goes out to anyone who loses a loved one on a British Columbia highway.
- We set speed limits based on the technical engineering of each section of highway.
- On some highways, a speed limit that's set too low can contribute to reckless driving, excessive speeding and accidents.
- Appropriate speed limits promote safety, encourage compliance and reduce speed differences.
- In fact, in B.C. when we changed thousands of kilometres of highway from 90 km/h to 100 km/h in the mid '90's, we saw a reduction in the number of crashes.
- Many of the world leaders in safe roads post speeds that are higher than B.C. For example, Sweden, which has one of the lowest rates of serious crashes in the world, posts their main freeways at 110 to 120 km/h.

- We want to ensure that we set the correct speed limits to make our highways as safe as possible.

19. Did you measure the severity of crashes and whether fatalities increased?

- The ministry analyzed safety data for serious crashes, which includes both injuries and fatal crashes from before and after the speed limits were increased. This data is based on police reported crashes to ICBC.

20. Are there more serious injuries and fatalities on these sections of highways than previously?

- The ministry analyzed safety data for serious crashes, which includes both injuries and fatal crashes from before and after the speed limits were increased. This data is based on police reported crashes to ICBC.
- On more than half the highway segments – 19 out of 33 – we saw crash rates drop or stay the same. We saw an increase in the crash rate on the remaining 14 segments.

21. Wouldn't severity or fatalities be a better indication of whether the speed increases should have been made?

- Crashes are caused by many factors. In more than half of the 33 sections of highway the crash rate went down.
- In seven highway segments the crash rate went up even though the operating speed did not.
- This indicates that factors other than the speed limit are contributing to crashes

22. How many more crashes did you see on highways where the speeds increased compared to 2014?

- We saw about 640 crashes on these highways in 2015, compared to 576 in 2014.
- This is close to the increase we saw on all British Columbia highways and mirrors the increase we've seen in the US and

other jurisdictions as more people take to the road and as we see distracted driving rates continue to climb.

23. How many more fatalities did you see on highways where the speeds increased compared to 2014?

- There were 34 fatal crashes on these highways in 2015, compared to 29 fatal crashes in 2014.
- We have to keep in mind that crashes can be due to a number of factors, such as: distracted driving, driving under the influence, driving fatigued, aggressive driving, etc
- We work hard every day to keep these highways safe, and will continue to do so.
- The actions I am announcing today are part of this continued effort.
- On the 14 sections where the crash rate has increased we're investing in added safety features like improved road markings, better signage, new rumble strips, variable speed signs and wildlife safety measures.
- Also, we are rolling back the speed limit changes on two sections of highway – Highway 1 from Hope to Cache Creek and on Highway 5A from Princeton to Merritt.

24. You say short and long term safety improvements. When are you going to make the new safety improvements?

- Some of the work is already underway. The majority of the work is timed to take advantage of planned road works 2016/2017.

25. When will you be introducing the new variable speed signs in the Fraser Valley?

- The Fraser Valley System will be operational in 2017/2018. As the population in the Fraser Valley grows so does the amount of commuter traffic.

- The Fraser Valley Variable System will be a congestion based systems which will smooth out the traffic flow and reduce the number of rear end collisions.

26. How much will the investments cost?

- We estimate that it will cost approximately $10 million for the new safety improvements.

27. What changes did you make to speed limits in 2014?

- Based on the 2014 review by professional engineers, we increased the speed limit on about 1,300 kilometres of rural provincial highway.
- It's important to note - Over 9,000 kilometres of rural highway was assessed, but only 1,300 kilometres were changed. This represents about 15 per cent of the rural highway assessed.
- The majority of the increases are limited to an additional 10 km/h, to match the speed limit with the existing travelled speed and improve speed limit consistency along corridors.
- This engineering assessment was based on speed zoning practices recommended by the Institute of Transportation Engineers and adopted by road authorities throughout North America.
- As a result, there is now a max speed of 120 km/h on three sections of divided, four-lane provincial highway totalling 392 kilometres:
    - Highway 5 (Coquihalla) from Hope to Kamloops
    - Highway 97C from Aspen Grove to the Highway 97 junction
    - Highway 19 from Parksville to Campbell River

28. Where did you get your information/data from to make the decision to raise the speed limits in the first place?

- As part of the rigorous review, our ministry drew on information based on current knowledge and studies.
- Our speed limit assessment was based on speed zoning practices recommended by the Institute of Transportation

Engineers and adopted by road authorities throughout North America.

- For each segment of highway, ministry professional engineers reviewed speed surveys to determine the 85th percentile speed. It is the predominant factor used in setting speed limits in North America.
- We also reviewed safety history, highway geometrics and land use.
- The majority of these increases are limited to an additional 10 km/h - to match the speed limit with the actual travelled speed.
- This is helping to improve speed limit consistency along corridors.

29. Was there public support for the speed limit changes?

- Yes – overwhelming public support for the changes made.
- In particular, there was strong public support for speed limit changes on the Coquihalla, Sea to Sky and Highway 1 from Abbotsford to Hope, with support over 80 per cent on some corridors.
- Our technical review supported public opinion.
- For each segment of highway, ministry professional engineers reviewed speed surveys to determine the 85th percentile speed. It is the predominant factor used in setting speed limits in North America.
- We also reviewed safety history, highway geometrics and land use.
- The majority of these increases are limited to an additional 10 km/h - to match the speed limit with the actual travelled speed.
- This is helping to improve speed limit consistency along corridors.

30. What is the government doing to make safety improvements on BC highways?

- $18 billion has been invested on safety upgrades and road maintenance by the B.C. government and its partners since 2001.

- This investment includes: Approximately 190 km of new four and six lane highway segments, and more than 400 intersections upgraded.
- We have also repaired or replaced more than 500 bridges.
- In addition, the government has improved legislation and increased penalties for high risk driving behaviours such as distracted driving, aggressive driving, and driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Due to these combined safety improvements, the number of serious crashes on provincial highways has decreased by 28% since 2003.

Event Proposal – For Minister Stone
MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Event Title: **Rural Highway Safety & Speed Review – Post implementation recommendations**

Date: July 19, 2016 **Time:** Morning (TBD)	**Media Market:** Press Gallery, Majors, Province-wide
Location: Oak or Hemlock Room (TBC) - Legislature	**English Media Spokesperson:** Minister Todd Stone
	Multicultural Media Spokesperson: Minister Todd Stone
Author/Ministry: Lisanne Bowness, Senior Public Affairs Officer, Transportation and Infrastructure	

THE EVENT

PROACTIVE EVENT OR INVITATION

- One hour technical PowerPoint briefing with Ministry staff (Ed Miska) followed by a Minister Availability at the blue curtain.
- Minister will give a five minute overview with details on actions moving forward and then is available for a QA.

EVENT

- The ministry will release details on the safety and speed statistics for the 33 highway segments where the speeds were changed in the summer/ fall of 2014 as part of the Rural Highway Safety and Speed Review.
- Media/ public have been waiting for these results.
- The ministry will also talk about results of other components from review - actions included installing variable speed signs on three sections of highway where the weather can change quickly, reminding motorists about the importance of preparing their vehicles for winter weather conditions, strengthening left lane legislation, and continuing to implement systems and warning signs to prevent wildlife collisions.
- A report will be released (and posted online) and a NR/ BG will go out – all at same time

PRE-ANNOUNCEMENT COMMUNICATIONS ROLLOUT

The following organizations will be briefed on the upcoming Rural Highway Safety and Speed Post Implementation Recommendations.

Organization	Embargoed copies received on this date	Meeting Date	Approximate Announcement Date & Tech Briefing
RoadSafety BC	July 5	Week of July 4 or July 11	July 19
ADM - PSSG	July 5	Week of July 4 or July 11	July 19
ADM – Health	July 5	Week of July 4 or July 11	July 19
PHO (Perry Kendal and Bonnie Henry) & Coroner	July 5	Week of July 4 or July 11	July 19

RCMP	July 5	Week of July 4 or July 11	July 19
Minister Morris PSSG	July 5	July 18, 2016	July 19
BCACP Chair	July 5	July 18, 2016	July 19
BC Road Safety Steering committee	July 5	July 18, 2016	July 19

BACKGROUND

- The Rural Highway Safety and Speed Review recommended changes to the speed limits on 33 segments or 1,300 kilometres of provincial highway.
- This was based on a thorough engineering assessment using speed zoning practices recommended by the Institute of Transportation Engineers and adopted by road authorities throughout North America.
- Engineering experts within the ministry and safety experts outside of the ministry have assessed the data since the speed limit changes were made to these sections of rural highway in July and September 2014.

GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA FUNDING / PARTNER FUNDING (IF APPLICABLE)

- N/A

WHO'S ORGANIZING?

- GCPE/ Ministry

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

- Minister Stone will need to be available for talk radio the day of the announcement.
- s.13
- s.13
- The majority of segments 19 out of 33 had their crash rate decrease or stay the same however 14 had an increase. Of those 7 had a speed increase and 7 had the speed decrease or stay the same.
- s.13

VENUE DESCRIPTION

- Location: Minister's office / Oak Room, Legislature (pending room availability)

EVENT PARTICIPANTS (SPEAKERS)

- Minister Todd Stone

TARGET AUDIENCE

- Local communities, law enforcement, drivers, truckers/ trucking companies, health & road safety community

LENGTH OF SPEECH

3 minutes

TONE

Matter of fact – stating crash statistics and releasing report

ATTIRE

Business

COMMUNICATIONS MATERIALS:

- News Release/ Backgrounder

- Media Advisory
- Guest List
- Invitation
- QA
- Speaking Notes – for Min Stone & Emcee
- Podium Sign

VISUAL MESSAGE(S)

DESIRED PICTURE (STILL)

- Minister and other VIPs

DESIRED PICTURE (VIDEO)

- Same as above

WRITTEN MESSAGE(S)

DESIRED SOUNDBITE / KEY NEWS RELEASE SOUNDBITE

KEY MESSAGES

- It's been a year and a half since the ministry implemented changes to speeds on 33 segments, or 1,300 kilometres of provincial highway, as part of the 2014 Rural Highway Safety and Speed review.
- It was important for us to collect at least a year's worth of data and as we've said before, we will need to look at several years' worth in order to see any meaningful effect of the changes associated with the safety and speed review.
- We now have the data collected from the 12 month post implementation period.
- We've found that crash rates stayed the same or decreased on 19 of the 33 sections.
- For 14 of the 33 sections, the crash rate increased.
- There does not appear to be a correlation between speed limits and crashes. Of the 14 sections where crashed increased, 7 saw decreased speeds or no change and 7 saw increased speeds. More data will be needed to determine if there is a correlation.
- Our ministry remains committed to making our roads and highways as safe as possible.
- The ministry will take actions to reduce crashes in the sections that saw increased rates.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2016TRAN0166-001165
June 28, 2016

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

Crash rates are down or unchanged in 19 of 33 new speed zones

VICTORIA – New data released today by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure shows that crash rates have dropped, or are unchanged, on 19 of 33 sections of highway where speed limits were increased in 2014, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Todd Stone announced.

The Coquihalla from Hope to Kamloops, for example, where the speed limit was increased from 110 kilometres per hour to 120 km/h, continues to see the lowest crash rate in the last 10 years.

"Ministry engineers have taken a close look at the speed and crash data for each section of highway where we increased speed limits," Stone said. "They found that on 19 of 33 segments of highways, the crash rate either fell or remained unchanged."

Over the last six months, engineers in the ministry have carefully examined crash and speed data from the 33 sections of highway where speed limits were increased in 2014. The ministry's analysis, released today, compares crash data from Nov. 1, 2014 to Oct. 31, 2015 with crash data from the previous three years. The data shows:

- On seven sections, the rate of speed decreased and crashes decreased.
- On 12 sections, the rate of speed increased and crashes decreased.
- On seven sections, the rate of speed increased and crashes increased.
- On the remaining seven sections, the data shows that the crash rate increased, despite motorists traveling slower than they did before the speed limits were increased.

"Of particular interest, the data shows that we saw the crash rate increase on seven sections of highway where people were actually travelling slower," Stone said. "This suggests again that there are many different factors that can lead to crashes and speed is only one of them."

Changing weather conditions, distracted driving, driving too fast for conditions, heavy traffic, falling asleep, alcohol, driver error and wild animals can all contribute to crashes. Distracted driving, road conditions and driving too fast for conditions contributed to 54% of serious crashes where speed limits changed.

Distracted driving remains the leading cause of crashes on these sections of highway. In fact, the 2015 data shows distracted driving – also called driver inattentiveness – is still on the rise. Between Nov. 1, 2014 and Oct. 31, 2015, 28% of all crashes in these areas were primarily caused by distracted driving. Distracted driving was the primary cause of 22% of crashes during the previous 10 years. Driving faster than the posted speed limit was a contributing factor in only 2% of the crashes.

"Once again, this data serves as a reminder for the public to put your phone away while you are driving," Stone said. "We continue to see a rising number of people being killed or injured while using their phones and driving a vehicle. A text message, a phone call, a Facebook post is not worth your or someone else's life."

The ministry retained University of British Columbia researchers to assess the first year's crash data and look specifically at the sections of highways where the speed limits increased. The researchers concluded that there was not enough data in a single year to develop a statistically-significant trend for individual highway segments. However, they were able to determine, using a theoretical model, that the increase in crashes for all segments was up by an average of 11% in the first year. The UBC modelling is consistent with the 9% increase the province saw on all other British Columbian highways where the speed limits were not raised.

The one-year increase on B.C.'s highways is also consistent with the rising crash and fatality rates in places where speed limits have remained unchanged, as more people take to the road with lower gas prices and as distracted driving rates continue to climb. The United States, for example, saw a 14% increase in fatalities during the first six months of 2015. Oregon alone experienced a 59% spike during this period. Sweden – known for having some of the safest roads in the world – saw a 4% increase in the number of fatalities in 2014.

Likewise, highway speeds fluctuate every year regardless of whether speed limits change. For example, on Highway 16 Prince George to Vanderhoof, where speed limits haven't changed, the traveling speed is up by 6 km/h from 2013. Similarly, the speed increased by 7 km/h on Highway 1 from Kamloops to Salmon Arm (Hilltop to Tappen), despite no speed limit changes.

The researchers recommended that more analysis be done for a longer period of time and projected that the crash rate would drop in the coming years.

"The findings in the reports highlight some of the challenges and complexities of looking at this data for only one year. We really need at least three years of data to establish a trend and we need to look at the trends in context with the range of causes for crashes," Stone said. "Out of an abundance of caution, we will be introducing new safety features and making adjustments, where needed, on sections of highway where the crash rates have increased."

In total, the crash rate increased on 14 of 33 sections of highways where speed limits increased. On the 14 sections where the crash rate has increased, the Province will invest in added safety features like improved road markings, better signage, new rumble strips, variable speed signs and wildlife safety measures.

"When we introduced the speed changes in 2014, I committed that if any of the zones show an increase in crashes and we can't reduce them with engineering measures, the ministry would readjust the speeds," Stone said. "That is why the ministry will be rolling back the speed limit changes on two of the 33 sections of highway: Highway 1 from Hope to Cache Creek will return to 90 km/h and Highway 5A from Princeton to Merritt will return to 80 km/h."

The government, the police and ICBC will continue to work together on driver education and encouraging safe driving habits. In addition, the B.C. government continues to monitor safety on the highways and roads, working with the Road Safety Executive Steering Committee. This committee includes police and RCMP, ICBC, the provincial health officer, the chief coroner, WorksafeBC and RoadSafetyBC.

For two backgrounders, see the following links.

Improved safety measures on 14 sections of highways:
https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/BG_Improvedsafetyhighways.pdf

Safety and mobility improvements for B.C.'s highways:
https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/BG_SafetyMobilityhighways.pdf

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