



Senator Scott Wiener, 11th Senate District

Senate Bill 961 – Vehicle Safety Standards – Passive Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA)

SUMMARY

SB 961 addresses California’s traffic safety crisis by mandating common sense technologies and safety features on new passenger vehicles, trucks, and buses. The bill requires all new passenger vehicles, trucks or buses of model year 2030 or later that are manufactured or sold in the state to be equipped with passive intelligent speed assistance (ISA) technology – defined as technology that warns drivers when they exceed the speed limit by more than 10 mph.

BACKGROUND/EXISTING LAW

Speed Kills

According to the California Office of Traffic Safety’s (OTS) 2023 Traffic Safety Report, 1/3rd of all traffic fatalities in the state between 2017 and 2021 were speeding-related.¹ The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) notes that “A person hit by a car traveling at 35 miles per hour is five times more likely to die than a person hit by a car traveling at 20 miles hour.”²

What is Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA)?

Intelligent speed assistance vehicle technologies are capable of determining the speed limit on a roadway segment that a vehicle is traveling on and taking a specified action if the vehicle exceeds a specific threshold associated with that limit.

SB 961 defines Passive Intelligent Speed Assistance systems as systems that determines the speed limit of the roadway that the vehicle is traveling on uses a brief, one-time visual and audio signal to alert the driver each time they exceed the speed limit by 10 miles per hour.

According to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), multiple studies have illustrated speeding reductions from passive ISA systems. Benefits cited by the NTSB include “reduced mean driving speed, speed variability, and the proportion of

time that the speed limit was exceeded.” The NTSB further notes that a recent study found that passive ISA reduced the distance driven above the speed limit from 28% to 9%.³

ISA Implementation

The European Union has implemented regulations requiring a minimum of passive ISA to be implemented in all new vehicles beginning in July 2024.⁴ The regulation also goes even further by permitting the use of active ISA – also known as speed governors, which limit vehicle speeds at a certain threshold – to meet the requirement.

In the United States, multiple local jurisdictions – including Ventura County – have implemented after-market conversions of speed governors on their vehicle fleets. The New York City Department of City Administrative Services launched a pilot program in 2022, outfitting 50 vehicles in its vehicle fleet with speed governors. As of January, 2023, vehicles outfitted with the technology have driven over 133,400 miles and successfully traveled within speed limit parameters 99% of the time – with hard braking reduced significantly as well.⁵

The NTSB has identified 18 major vehicle manufacturers that offer features that go even further than the SB 961 passive ISA requirement – offering *active* ISA on at least some vehicle models.⁶ BMW, Ford, Hyundai, Jaguar Land Rover, Kia Motors, Mercedes-Benz, Mitsubishi Motors, and Nissan USA all have optional active ISA features on at least some vehicle models, with other manufacturers equipping some models with a passive ISA speed limit recognition and warning system. Toyota – the second-largest American auto manufacturer by market size – is implementing passive ISA as standard in all MY 2025 vehicles. With strengthened EU regulations set to go into effect in July 2024, it is likely that vehicle models will increasingly be equipped with Passive ISA in the United States.

¹ [California Office of Traffic Safety 2023 Annual Report](#)

² [NACTO - Vehicle Speed in Collisions](#)

³ [NTSB report](#)

⁴ [EU ISA Regulation](#)

⁵ [NYC Speed Governor Pilot Results](#)

⁶ [NTSB Report](#)

NTSB and other National Recommendations

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has repeatedly called for the National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) – the federal passenger vehicle safety regulator – to develop regulations requiring, at a minimum, intelligent speed assistance systems that warn a driver of a vehicle that they are speeding. The NTSB also recommended car manufacturers install such technology in all new passenger vehicles. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) – a national traffic safety non-profit scientific organization – has urged NHTSA to require speed limit recognition and warning systems in line with the NTSB’s recommendation.

Lack of Federal Regulation

Despite repeated calls by the NTSB, IIHS, and traffic safety advocates, the Federal Government has not taken action to develop final regulations requiring any sort of intelligent speed assistance technology to be implemented on passenger vehicles and/or trucks.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) – which is responsible for federal truck safety regulations – issued a supplemental notice for proposed rulemaking for potential regulations surrounding non-intelligent speed limiters on large trucks with a gross vehicle weight greater than 26,000 pounds.⁷ There is no similar rulemaking for ISA or non-intelligent speed limiters in passenger vehicles, and there is no indication or certainty that the current phase of the proposed rulemaking would result in a final rule on any timeline.

SOLUTION

ISA on Passenger Vehicles & Trucks

In a recent fatal vehicle collision investigation, the NTSB concluded that “broad deployment of ISA would reduce the frequency of speeding and speeding-related crashes.”⁸

In line with the NTSB recommendations, SB 961 requires, by model year 2030, every passenger vehicle, truck, and bus manufactured or sold in the state to be equipped with passive intelligent speed assistance systems to warn the driver with a brief, one-time audio and visual alert each time they exceed the speed limit by greater than 10 miles per hour. SB 961 does not prohibit vehicles from being equipped with Passive ISA technology that goes above and beyond this requirement.

SB 961’s passive ISA requirement does not apply to emergency vehicles or vehicles not equipped with GPS or front-facing cameras. Implementing passive ISA in the state of California will help reduce collisions and fatalities on the state’s roadways, helping achieve vision zero goals.

SUPPORT

- Streets For All (co-sponsor)
- CalBike (co-sponsor)
- Walk SF (co-sponsor)
- KidSafe SF (co-sponsor)
- National Transportation Safety Board
- National Safety Council
- AAA Northern California, Nevada & Utah
- Automobile Club of Southern California
- Institute for Safer Trucking
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- Streets are for Everyone (co-sponsor)
- FIA Foundation
- Vision Zero Network
- SPUR
- Families for Safe Streets USA
- TransForm
- City of Goleta
- Bike East Bay
- Bike LA
- Car-Lite Long Beach
- CCAEJ
- Clean Earth 4 Kids
- Conor Lynch Foundation
- East Bay for Everyone
- Everybody’s Long Beach
- Long Beach Bike Co-Op
- Los Angeles Walks
- Marin County Bicycle Coalition
- Move LA
- Pedal Movement
- Safe Routes Partnership
- SF Bay Area Families for Safe Streets
- SF Bay Area Physicians for Social Responsibility
- SoCal Families for Safe Streets
- The League of American Bicyclists
- Transbay Coalition
- Youth Climate Strike Los Angeles

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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⁷ [FMCSA Rulemaking Updates](#)

⁸ [NTSB Report](#)