

**From:** [Anderson, Janelle \(DOT\)](#)  
**To:** [Buchen, Peter \(DOT\)](#); [Misgen, Steven \(DOT\)](#); [Anderson, Janelle \(DOT\)](#); [chris.byrd@co.benton.mn.us](mailto:chris.byrd@co.benton.mn.us); [Colton, Diane \(DOT\)](#); [Dagon, Tiffany \(DOT\)](#); [Howard Preston](#); [Joe Gustafson](#); [Johnson, Kenneth \(DOT\)](#); [Jon Krieg](#); [Lott, Heather \(DOT\)](#); [Mark Sehr](#); [Paul St. Martin](#); [Scott Poska](#); [Tayse, Josephine \(DOT\)](#); [Thomas Sohrweide](#); [Thompson, Scott \(DOT\)](#); [Tim Plath](#); [Vizecky, Mark \(DOT\)](#); [Wenkel, Kenneth \(DOT\)](#); [William Stein \(william.stein@dot.gov\)](mailto:william.stein@dot.gov)  
**Subject:** FW: INFORMATION AND ACTION: MUTCD--CMS Messages  
**Date:** Thursday, December 31, 2015 9:44:58 AM  
**Importance:** High

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FYI

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**From:** [william.stein@dot.gov](mailto:william.stein@dot.gov) [<mailto:william.stein@dot.gov>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 23, 2015 4:14 PM  
**To:** Anderson, Janelle (DOT)  
**Cc:** Starr, Ray (DOT); Porter, Susan (DOT)  
**Subject:** INFORMATION AND ACTION: MUTCD--CMS Messages  
**Importance:** High

FYI

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**From:** Kehrli, Mark (FHWA)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 23, 2015 9:26 AM  
**To:** FHWA-#ALLDA-OfficialMailbox  
**Cc:** FHWA-#ALLDFS-OfficialMailbox; Lindley, Jeffrey (FHWA); Sylvester, Kevin (FHWA)  
**Subject:** INFORMATION AND ACTION: MUTCD--CMS Messages  
**Importance:** High

**\*\*\*\*\*INFORMATION AND ACTION\*\*\*\*\***

## **SUBJECT: TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES AND PUBLIC INPUT**

Some jurisdictions have started to use public polling to determine safety campaign messages that they will display on their changeable message signs.

Public feedback is an important part of monitoring the performance of our transportation system. However, public input is but one component in making decisions about transportation infrastructure. Actions regarding traffic control devices must ultimately be based on engineering considerations. Asking the public to suggest messages often results in colloquial or oblique phrasing that does not adhere to the basic principles of sign message construction. If a public input process is used, then the messages should be determined through the engineering process prior to presenting them to the public for polling purposes.

Regardless of whether public input is solicited, the messages displayed on any official traffic sign must espouse the basic principles of the MUTCD, particularly those stated in Sec. 1A.02 for effective traffic control devices:

- Fulfill a need;
- Command attention;
- Convey a clear, simple meaning;

- Command respect from road users; and
- Give adequate time for proper response.

However well-intentioned, indirect, unconventional syntax of sign legends does not convey a clear, simple meaning or command respect. There is no basis to support presumptions that “creative” messages are more effective at commanding attention or modifying driver behavior compared to conventional messages.

Please ensure that any safety campaign messages in your State are part of a coordinated effort between highway operations and law enforcement and that reasonable, responsible practices that are consistent with other signing policies and criteria are adhered to. Please direct any questions about this issue to the [MUTCD Team](#).