The Honorable Victor M. Mendez
Administrator, Federal Highway Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Mendez:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you about the concerns of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) with certain revisions that were made in the 2009 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and to request that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) take steps to amend these revisions as soon as possible. The FDOT was not given the opportunity to review and comment on these important revisions before they were published. These changes were not proposed in the Notice of Proposed Amendment for the MUTCD published by the FHWA and these revisions were also not presented to the National Committee on Uniform Control Devices, which is the normal process for any proposed revision to the MUTCD. The following are the revisions that FDOT has concerns with and we feel could impact the safety of roadways or will impose a significant financial burden on the State of Florida.

**Section 1A.13: Definition of the Term “Standard”:**
The revision to modify the definition of Standard is a major concern for FDOT as it now means that FDOT does not have any authority to use “engineering judgment” or “basis of an engineering study” to modify a Standard. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to meet all the Standard requirements in the MUTCD, and past editions of the MUTCD had language to allow for this concern. An example of this is when we are conducting a traffic signal warrant study and the study showed that the traffic volumes were a few counts short of the required Standard and one crash short of the required number of crashes per the Standard, but the study recommended the best safety solution for this location would be the installation of a traffic control signal. According to MUTCD 2009 we would not be allowed to use “engineering judgment” to approve the installation of this traffic signal, even though it would be the best safety solution. The FDOT requests that the MUTCD 2003 language be retained which allowed for modifications of a Standard based on an engineering study or engineering judgment.

The Department has received the FHWA Official Interpretation Letter “1(09)-1 (I) – Definition of Standard Statement”, dated October 1, 2010, which does provide an interpretation that the Department will still be allowed, in very limited and specific cases, to deviate from the requirement of a Standard in the 2009 MUTCD, provided that the Department fully documents the engineering reasons for the deviation. The Department is very appreciative that the FHWA has issued this interpretation on this very important issue, but the Department still request that the language in the 2009 MUTCD be revised as soon as possible.

**Optional Lane Exit Signage for Interstates Interchanges (Figures 2E-11 and 2E-12):**
The FDOT was not given opportunity to comment on Figures 2E-11 and 2E-12 and to change our signing statewide to conform to this new Standard would be extremely costly. This new requirement will require a sign structure that is much larger than any sign structure that the Department has ever designed. You must remember that Florida is required to design for 150 mph wind-loading on signs, which produces very large sign structure members. We are currently working on an interchange design project (see Figure 1) related to this issue and we have determined that it would cost an additional $500,000 to change from
our current signing practice to this new requirement. The State of Florida has over 750 interchanges, of
which we estimate at least 200 structures would require this type of modification, which would have an
estimated cost of $100 Million, which the FDOT does not feel is justified when you consider the benefit-
cost of the requirement. The FDOT requests that the series of signs used in Figures 2E-11 and 2E-12 be
rescinded, until they are allowed to go through the normal review and approval process to develop a
workable solution.

The Department has been discussing this issue directly with Mr. Hari Kalla with the FHWA MUTCD Team
and they are recommending as a possible solution for this issue is that Florida consider doing a "Request
for Experimentation" per the MUTCD for our current design project. This approach may be acceptable for
this one individual project, but this will not be a long term solution, therefore we still request that series of
signs used in Figures 2E-11 and 2E-12 be rescinded as soon as possible.

Figure 1. Palmetto Expressway Pull-Through Signs

Section 3A.06 Functions, Widths and Patterns of Longitudinal Pavement Marking, Section 3B.04
White Lane Line Pavement Marking and Warrants, and Section 3B.05 Other White Longitudinal
Pavement Marking:
Some of the new Standards in Sections 3B.04, 3B.05 and 3B.06 did not follow the normal approval
process and since FDOT was not given the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes, we
request that these changes be rescinded. One of the main concerns for FDOT is that our standard normal
white line pavement marking is 6-inches wide and the new 2009 MUTCD has a requirement that a "Wide
Line" is at least twice the width of a normal line, therefore this now requires FDOT to use a 12-inch line at
locations that we are currently using a 8-inch line. Also, these new Standards do not have any language
to allow states that use raised-pavement-marking's every 40-feet or provide gore-chevron markings as an
option to meet the new requirement. This new requirement will require an additional cost for both new
construction and resurfacing projects. The FDOT has estimated that these new requirements will cost an
additional $5,000 per interchange on every pavement marking project, which would be $3.75 Million every
7-10 years. Our understanding is that these new requirements were not based on any new safety related
research, but on a survey of practice by states, therefore we request these changes be rescinded.
Toll Shields:
The FDOT requests that the new Standard for Toll Shield design (see Figure 2) be revised to allow us to continue using our existing Florida toll shield (see Figure 3) that was specifically developed many years ago for our statewide toll route system. We currently estimate that we have over 2,500 toll shield signs installed and this new requirement would require us to start using a new toll shield design that would not be consistent with our existing toll shields. While we understand that we are not required to change our existing toll shields until they have ended their service life, having two different types of toll shields on our toll route system is not good for driver expectancy. To change all of our 2,500 toll shields would be very costly due to the maintenance of traffic cost to change the toll shields on the overhead sign structures.

Figure 2. Florida Toll Route Shield using MUTCD 2009 Toll Shield Standard

Figure 3. Existing Florida Toll Route Shield

Finally, FDOT appreciates the excellent working relationship that we have with the FHWA, especially the Florida Division Office and the MUTCD Team in the Washington DC Office. We appreciate the hard work and many long hours of effort by FHWA staff to complete the publishing of the 2009 MUTCD, but hope the information provided herein will convince the FHWA to address FDOT’s concerns about these revisions in the 2009 MUTCD.

We appreciate your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Stephanie C. Kopelousos
Secretary

cc: Martin Knopp, FHWA Florida Division Administrator
    Hari Kalla, FHWA MUTCD Team Leader
    Ananth Prasad, Assistant Secretary for Engineering & Operations
    Brian Blanchard, Chief Engineer
    Mark C. Wilson, State Traffic Operations Engineer