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October 8, 2025

To: City and County Transportation Officials

Subject: Compliance with Pavement Marking Standards on Public Roads in Texas

Dear Colleagues,

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is committed to ensuring the safety and uniformity of traffic control devices across all public roads in Texas. This letter serves to affirm both federal and state policy regarding pavement surface markings and traffic control devices, including those installed and maintained by local jurisdictions.

On July 1, 2025, U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy announced the SAFE ROADS Initiative (Safe Arterials for Everyone through Reliable Operations and Distraction-Reducing Strategies). The initiative emphasizes that intersections and crosswalks should be “kept free from distractions,” including political messages, artwork, or any other non-standard markings that may compromise safety. This aligns with longstanding FHWA guidance regarding colored pavement. See FHWA Interpretation Letter 3(09)-24(I) (2013).

TxDOT promulgates federal standards through the Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (TMUTCD), under the authority granted by Texas Transportation Code §§ 544.001, and 201.103. Local authorities are required to comply with the TMUTCD by section 544.002. These statutes require uniformity in traffic control devices and authorize TxDOT to oversee compliance on public roadways.

Non-standard surface markings, signage, and signals that do not directly support traffic control or safety may cause confusion, reduce roadway uniformity, and impair the effectiveness of both human and automated vehicle navigation. Consistency in traffic control devices is essential to maintaining a safe and efficient transportation network.

Pavement markings such as decorative crosswalks, murals, or markings conveying artwork or other messages are prohibited on travel lanes, shoulders, intersections, and crosswalks unless they serve a direct traffic control or safety function. This prohibition includes the use of symbols, flags, or other markings conveying any message or communications.

Local jurisdictions must remedy any non-compliant installations within 30 days. Exceptions may be granted only with written approval from TxDOT's Traffic Safety Division, based on a demonstrated public safety benefit or compelling justification. Failure to comply may result in:

- Withholding or denial of state or federal funding
- Suspension of agreements between TxDOT and the local jurisdiction
- Required removal or modification of non-compliant markings on roads that are part of the state highway system or funded through TxDOT-administered programs

I have asked that your TxDOT District Engineer follow up with your agency to answer any questions that your organization may have and outline any areas of concern.

We appreciate your partnership in maintaining a safe and consistent transportation network across Texas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Williams', with a stylized, cursive script.

Marc D. Williams, P.E.
Executive Director

cc: Federal Highway Administration, Texas Division
Senior Leadership, Texas Department of Transportation