



First Freeway Demonstration in Freiburg – A real traffic transformation must come now

Bike Demonstration on the motorway A5 near Freiburg –

Begin 17th July 2022, 14 o'clock at the „Platz der Alten Synagoge“

StudentsForFuture Freiburg demand a real traffic turnaround, nationwide and here in Freiburg. A speed limit of 100 km/h must be introduced on all German highways, the construction of the new federal highway A20 and the planned B31 West, as well as the city tunnel in Freiburg must be stopped. The demands on politics also include an abolition of the fuel discount, which was only introduced on 01.06., and the retention of the 9€ ticket with the future prospect of free public transport.

Germany is the only European country without a speed limit on highways, as well as the only industrialized country without a speed limit. While road users in other countries use freeways with a speed limit of just 70 kilometres per hour,[1] here in Germany traffic fatalities on freeways due to excessive speeds have been rising again since 2013. However, the inhumanly high speeds frequently driven on German Autobahns not only risks the lives of many people, because many traffic jams are also induced by excessive differences in speed. Furthermore, the emission of pollutants increases significantly with every kilometre per hour more significantly. [2,3]

Thus, a speed limit of 100 km/h would be a strong relief of the CO₂-balance in the transport sector. In one year, this speed limit would save around 6.2 million tons of CO₂ and 2.5 billion litres of fuel, thus reducing the total fuel consumption of cars and vans by around 6.5%. [2,3] With a speed limit of 100, we would not only relieve Germany's climate footprint, but also

strengthen our independence from crude oil from autocracies. Thus, the Russian dictator Putin would get a little less money from our coffers through a speed limit to finance his terrible war.

The construction and expansion of new highways, whether the A20 federal highway or the B31-West here in Freiburg, has only negative effects in these times. In addition to the large consumption of "grey energy" that a new construction of highways requires, large areas are sealed as well as some people are even deprived of their own livelihood.

Likewise, the large-scale sealing of soils, forests and fields makes Germany increasingly vulnerable to extreme weather. Because where there is less water to drain away through seepage, floods occur more quickly, such as the one in the Ahr Valley in 2020, which claimed the lives of more than a hundred people. Moreover, it is a scientific consensus that more roads and thus a higher attractiveness of the car does not lead to relief, as often promised, but to more traffic and thus more congestion. [4]

The expansion of rail networks makes the highway superfluous as a transport route for goods and people superfluous. Large quantities of goods could be transported to their destinations much more energy-efficiently, punctually, and safely via well-developed rail networks.

The planned expansion of rail networks for long-distance passenger transport demonstrates the futility and waste of resources of building and expanding new federal highways.

Let us now refer to concrete local projects.

The planned federal highway B31-West, here in Freiburg, is rejected by us for various reasons. In addition to the sharp increase in costs from a previously forecast 49 million to 164 million euros, environmental protection, species conservation and nature conservation are also strongly in conflict with the planned federal highway. The preferred route of the B31-West would destroy the Wasenweiler and Gottenheimer Ried, one of the last fens in Baden-Württemberg and the largest fen in the Upper Rhine Plain with a unique flora and fauna. Thus, the new construction is also in direct conflict with the bog protection strategy of the state of Baden-Württemberg as well as the German and European climate goals. [5]

In our view, the city tunnel that has been planned in Freiburg for a long time must not be built either. The residents of the B31 must be relieved in other ways. This includes closures for

heavy traffic and a reduction of the attractiveness for individual traffic on this road. A new city tunnel contradicts all demands for a traffic turnaround, both ecologically and economically. In addition, the "gray energies" have not been sufficiently accounted for here either, and the amount of raw materials and energy required for construction alone are not compatible with climate targets. Investments must be made in shifting freight traffic to rail here in the Black Forest as well. [6]

Finally, about the fuel discounts: After the fuel rebate was passed in the Bundestag in addition to the sensible 9€ ticket, we are outraged. The fuel rebate shows significant problems: First, the fuel rebate is not socially fair, people with a lot of money and larger cars, benefit due to increased fuel consumption significantly more than people with less income and statistically lower fuel consumption. Second, the fuel rebate leads to subsidies in the wrong direction. In 2022, when the climate crisis is so far advanced, we can no longer afford subsidies in fossil fuels, which fuel the climate crisis and often contribute to the promotion of autocracies. Third, much of the money does not even fall into the hands of consumers, but into the hands of oil companies and refineries, supporting infrastructures and corporations that are destroying our planet.

Instead, the billions of euros in subsidies should or must be invested in public transport. So we must be able to count on a long-term 9€-ticket, as well as a, in the near future free public transport for all. This is the only way to support socially disadvantaged people and make the use of public transport more attractive.

In this way, the urgently needed transformation in transportation can be advanced.

Sources:

[1] <https://detektor.fm/gesellschaft/karte-der-woche-tempolimit-auf-autobahnen>

[2]

https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/sites/default/files/medien/366/dokumente/ubakurzpapier_tempolimit_autobahnen_kliv_0.pdf

[3] <https://www.zeit.de/news/2022-04/13/so-viel-sprit-spart-ein-tempolimit-auf-der-autobahn> [4]

Becker, U. J. (2018). Verkehr und Umwelt. In Schwedes, O. (Hrsg.), Verkehrspolitik – Eine interdisziplinäre Einführung (S. 78). (2. Aufl.). Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien GmbH.

[5] <https://www.b31west-neindanke.de>

[6] <http://stadttunnel.de/faktenargumente/>