



Legislative Agenda

Each year prior to the opening of the legislature we preview the bills on the Colorado Department of Transportation's (CDOT) Legislative Agenda. The Second Regular Session of the Seventieth General Assembly will convene on January 13, 2016. CDOT has 3 bills that will be introduced in the coming session. The department's agenda is developed in conjunction with CDOT's Executive Management Team in coordination with the Governor's Office.

The first is a bill centered on bridge height. Currently, CDOT must publish a map that shows all the bridges in compliance with the statutory 14'6" bridge height requirement. The proposal would flip this requirement and allow the department to publish the bridges that are not in compliance. This allows a less cluttered map showing freight haulers and others the safe routes to travel. *Continued on page 2*

I-70 Mountain Express Lanes

On Saturday, December 12th the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) will open the I-70 Mountain Express Lanes. This marks a significant step in the comprehensive plan to improve travel in the I-70 Mountain Corridor. Thirteen miles of Eastbound I-70 within CDOT's existing right of way has been upgraded between Empire and the Veterans Memorial Tunnels (just east of Idaho Springs). These improvements will create the I-70 Mountain Express Lane; a wide shoulder that, only during peak travel periods, will operate as a third travel lane. Initially the lanes will be opened without a toll charge to allow drivers to get used to the new configuration and to allow for testing.



FAST Act Signed into Law

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act was approved by Congress on Thursday, December 3 and signed by President Obama on December 4. This is the first long-term Federal Transportation Authorization since 2005. The new authorization represents a modest funding increase for highway and transit programs over previous authorization levels. The FAST Act is a five year (FY 2016 - FY 2020) \$300 billion highway, transit, safety and rail bill. It provides approximately \$225 billion in contract authority over five years for the Federal-aid Highway program, increasing funding from \$41 billion in FY 2015 to \$47 billion in FY 2020. The bill continues to distribute nearly 93 percent of all Federal-aid Highway program contract authority to State DOTs through formula programs.



The FAST Act provides approximately \$61 billion over five years for Federal transit... *Continued on page 2*

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The next bill specifies what authority CDOT has in providing parking enforcement at their Park-n-Rides. Currently, the department does not have enumerated authority and this bill would allow CDOT to enforce parking the same way the Denver metro area's Regional Transportation District (RTD) enforces parking on their properties. CDOT's goal is to create multi-modal transit hubs around Colorado, in partnership with private transit companies, and this bill provides clarity for that partnership moving into the future.

The final bill would create an exemption for RTD buses to travel on the roadway shoulder. This issue arose recently out of discussion with the federal government. The shoulder along U.S. 36, while built for buses to travel on it during certain circumstances, cannot be designated as a traffic lane. Statute does not allow vehicles to pass on the shoulder, so a simple cleanup bill to allow buses to travel on the U.S. 36 shoulder is necessary to preserve the bus rapid transit plans for the corridor.



Winter Driving

Snow, ice and freezing temperatures have returned to Colorado. Visit CDOT's comprehensive travel website COTrip.org for the latest up-to-date travel and weather information as well as traffic cameras, route information and travel alerts. We want everyone to arrive safely at Grandmother's house...or wherever your final destination might be.

FAST Act *(Continued from page 1)*

programs including \$48.9 billion in Highway Trust Fund contract authority and roughly \$12 billion in funding from the General Fund. For highway safety the bill provides \$4.7 billion for NHTSA (\$3.7 million from the HTF) and \$3.2 billion for the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. The FAST Act authorizes approximately \$10 billion over five years for the Federal Railroad Administration and Amtrak. TIFIA is funded at \$275 million in 2016 and increases to \$300 million in 2020. A roll-over provision is included so that unused TIFIA allocations accumulate year to year rather than being redistributed. The FAST Act also creates a new \$800 million per year (grows to \$1 billion in 2020) Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects Program that will provide grants to highway, bridge, rail-grade crossing, intermodal and freight rail projects costing more than \$100 million. The program will allow up to \$500 million to be allocated to freight rail and/or intermodal projects.

For Colorado, the bill increased highway formula funding from \$516 million in 2015 to \$542 million in 2016 (a 5% increase) and grows to \$592 million in 2020. On the transit side, funding increases from \$111.5 million in 2015 to \$114.6 million in 2016 and grows to \$124.8 million in 2020. A new formula distribution National Freight Program was also created that will provide Colorado with \$85 million over five years for freight infrastructure improvements. Also significant for our state was the designation of I-70 between Denver and Salt Lake City as a High Priority Corridor on the National Highway System opening up opportunities for that corridor to be prioritized when applying for federal grant programs.

For more information on the FAST Act contact, Ron Papsdorf, Federal Affairs and Local Government Liaison at 303-757-9105.