



COLORADO

Department of Transportation

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DATE: January 11, 2019
TO: Transportation Commissioners, Executive Director, Executive Management Team, Branch Managers, and Office Directors
FROM: Andy Karsian, Office of Policy & Government Relations
RE: Legislative Update

The first session of the 72nd General Assembly blew into town on January 4th. With Democrats controlling both the House and the Senate, the tenor and tone of this Assembly will be different from sessions past. In addition to the policy and political debates on how best to govern the state, legislators will decide how to allocate new federal revenues that by some estimates equal up to \$1 billion.

While transportation will not be the number one priority for this session, as it has been in recent years, there will be plenty of bills on the subject. The session is one week old and already there are bills on CDOT administrative procedures, state highway funding, and distracted driving. Other bills dealing with electric vehicles, regional transportation authorities, new road user fees, and other funding ideas are in the works to be introduced soon.

Legislation

As of today, CDOT is tracking 28 bills for possible direct or indirect impacts to CDOT, its employees, and the state's transportation network. Below are summaries of a few bills introduced or heard this week.

Senate Bill 19-051 (Increase General Fund Funding for Transportation):

Last year the Legislature passed SB18-001, which dedicated general fund revenues to transportation. This bill increases the SB-1 transfer by \$190 million. The increase comes from new federal revenue projected for the next fiscal year. The new funding would raise the SB-1 transfer in FY 19-20 to \$340 million. The breakdown would include \$266.5 million to the state highway fund, \$51 million to counties and municipalities, and \$22.5 million to the multi-modal options fund.

Senate Bill 19-032 (Hazardous Materials Transport Routing):

Currently, freight trucks carrying petroleum products must travel over Loveland Pass (US 6) unless weather conditions are so bad the pass is closed. Then the trucks are allowed to go through the Eisenhower Johnston Memorial Tunnels under certain circumstances. Over the years, both of these options have proved controversial, gas trucks have overturned and spilled fuel on the pass, and having fully laden fuel trucks travelling through the tunnel heightens possibilities of a fire that could close the tunnel.

This bill would require CDOT to convene stakeholders to study what infrastructure projects would be necessary to allow hazardous fuel trucks to travel through the EJMT tunnel. The focus of the study would be to review work already done on this issue and quantify how much it would cost to mitigate the dangers of transporting fuel over these two roads.

Senate Bill 19-017 (Requirements for CDOT Land Acquisition):

This bill stems from the Colorado Supreme Court's decision that said the Transportation Commission must approve all of CDOT's land acquisitions. Statute says the Transportation Commission and the Chief Engineer may approve acquisitions. Prior to the decision the Chief Engineer approved the acquisitions. The bill clarifies that instead of all of the acquisition approvals, the Chief Engineer may approve those acquisitions that involve willing sellers and the Transportation Commission will approve those that involve condemnation.

