



COLORADO

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DATE: January 25, 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

With the Martin Luther King holiday on Monday, the legislators crammed five days of work into four, or maybe it was just the liaisons cramming. The Senate Transportation committee met for the first time this session and heard some bills of interest to CDOT (see below). Additionally, transportation stakeholders gathered for a working lunch at the Capitol. Hosted by Reps. Gray and Hansen, participants offered ideas on how the state could fund transportation and how that funding can be used. CDOT, HPTE and two Transportation Commissioners attended the lunch. The general consensus coming out of the meeting was that a policy portfolio is needed, with a variety of fixes possibly including user fees, direct funding, financing, and future ballot measures. As the March economic forecast gets closer, ideas will begin to coalesce around a later session strategy for transportation funding.

Legislation

As of today, CDOT is tracking 14 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 19-101 (Prerequisites for Construction of Managed Lanes):

This legislation modifies how CDOT and the High Performance Transportation Enterprise (HPTE) approach the development of managed lanes. Under this bill, CDOT and HPTE must evaluate alternative means of increasing highway capacity or reducing traffic congestion before the construction of a managed lane. Additional reporting requirements are added for CDOT and HPTE, including testifying in front of the legislature if a managed lane is planned on any future corridor. The limitations of this bill could prevent the department from pursuing a managed toll lane project and may not be able to leverage the financial tools and private partnerships necessary for managed lane construction.

Senate Bill 19-012 (Use of Mobile Electronic Devices While Driving):

The Senate Transportation committee heard this bill on Thursday. It was standing room only and more than 20 people testified. The support centered around the lowering the growing number of distracted drivers on the roads. Supporters spoke to existing statutory language, which this bill removes, that makes it more difficult for law enforcement to stop distracted drivers. Unless distracted drivers are driving in a careless manner, law enforcement officers may not cite the driver. The bulk of the opposition centered around the large increase in fees for texting while driving and the ban on holding any mobile electronic device in a driver's hand while operating the vehicle. After more than three hours of testimony, the Chair laid the bill over to continue working with the sponsor so the bill will not die in committee. It will be heard again next week.

House Bill 19-1072 (Require Traffic Signals to Cycle Yellow Before Green):

This bill gets the award for the most out of the box thinking on reducing the number of people running red lights. The idea behind the bill is to reprogram all traffic lights in the state to cycle green, yellow, red, yellow, then green again. The intent is to let drivers know and better time when they are able to approach and pass through an intersection. The bill sponsor is pulling the bill because the policy would be against the Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices, and, many people argued that the bill would create more confusion than not.

