



COLORADO

Department of Transportation

Office of Policy and Government Relations

DATE: April 6, 2018
TO: Transportation Commissioners, Executive Director, Executive Management Team, Branch Managers, and Office Directors
FROM: Andy Karsian, Office of Policy & Government Relations
RE: Legislative Update

Overview

Over the last two weeks the Legislatures debated and passed the state budget. Both chambers put amendments on the budget, adding an additional \$73M above what the Joint Budget Committee (JBC) originally put forth. The JBC, however, still gets the final say on what stays and what goes. After both chambers pass the amended bill the JBC removes the vast majority of that additional spending.

The budget was not the only controversial vote this week. The Senate also voted on a resolution to expel a Senator based on sexual harassment allegations. The chamber needed 2/3 of the members to approve the resolution but only a simple majority voted to expel, but it did signal another historic vote – never before have both chambers of the State Legislature in the same session voted to expel one of their members.

Legislation

As of today, there are CDOT is tracking 32 bills for possible direct or indirect impacts on CDOT, its employees, and the state's transportation network. Below are summaries of a few bills introduced or heard this week.

House Bill 18-1340 (Infrastructure Funding): As part of the budget package, HB1340 funds the Capital Development Committee's statewide project list. This year, because of the budget surplus, the JBC added an additional one-time \$495M transfer to the State Highway Fund. Last week the House added local governments and multimodal projects into the funding mix. The House amendment proposed a 35% portion to the state, 50% split evenly to local governments and 15% to multimodal project funding. The Senate stripped that amendment when they debated the bill, and returned it to the original form.

Since the bill changed from one chamber to the next, there will likely be a conference committee. A conference committee is when legislators form a group of six members to hash out a solution between the two chambers. The JBC will be the conference committee for this bill since it is a state budget bill and not a bill introduced by an individual Senator or Representative. By the end of next week, they will decide on how much money will go to roads and how that money will be divided, if at all.

House Bill 18-1272 (Network Level Distracted Driving Controls): Trying to address the ever growing problem of distracted driving in the state, HB 1272 requires telecommunication providers such as Verizon or AT&T to allow cars to connect to technology that blocks certain phones' signals while driving. Consumers who opt to use the tech would have their phones, or their children's phones, blocked while the car is running. The tech is tied to the vehicle's ignition and could notify parents and other users of instances when a phone number sent texts or calls while the vehicle was running. CDOT and CSP testified in support of the bill in the House Transportation committee based on the positive impact it could have on reducing crashes. The bill is likely to pass the House but it faces a difficult time in the Senate where the telecommunication companies are already lobbying against the bill on the grounds that the bill infringes on competition and consumer choice.

