



COLORADO

Department of Transportation

Office of Policy and Government Relations

DATE: February 16, 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

This week some state and national politics overshadowed some interesting policies. Discussions surrounding traffic enforcement, recreational vehicle use on public lands and finding balance between bicyclists and vehicles on roads received less attention than the fact that Colorado's Senate Transportation Chair resigned his Chairmanship amid a growing sexual harassment scandal. Additionally, the Trump administration offered their suggestions on how to pay for infrastructure, which could add incentives for Colorado to get some dedicated state funding for roads in order to leverage federal funding. Overall, another busy week or policy and politics.

Legislation

As of today, there are CDOT is tracking 24 bills for possible direct or indirect impacts on CDOT, its employees, or the state's transportation network. Below are summaries of a few bills introduced or heard this week.

House Bill 18-1072 (Prohibition of Electronic Cameras for Traffic Enforcement): Red light cameras and speed enforcement technology are always a contentious issue for lawmakers. This year's bill, HB 1072, prohibited the use of cameras for traffic enforcement, except in the cases of tolling and HOV enforcement. While there are arguments that local governments can abuse camera traffic enforcement for revenue generation, there are plenty of data showing the use of cameras reduces the number of traffic infractions such as running red lights and speeding. CDOT testified in opposition to the bill because the bill's language repealed an existing authority for the department to use cameras for traffic enforcement in work zones, as well as prohibiting uses of camera technology on future highway projects, smart metering cameras, for example. The bill died on a 8 to 4 vote in the House Transportation Committee.

Senate Bill 18-140 (Motor Vehicle and Vulnerable Road User Penalties): This bill added a new kind of type 1 misdemeanor for motor vehicle drivers who strike vulnerable road users. The bill defines the vulnerable road users as a wide variety of road users, from pedestrians to CDOT maintenance workers on the side of the highway. Supporters argued that this would allow law enforcement to place an additional penalty on careless drivers. The opposition argued that enough penalties already exist and this bill was unnecessary. The Senate Judiciary committee members agreed with the oppositions and the bill died on a party line vote of 3 - 2.

House Bill 18-1103 (Local Government Off Highway Vehicle Registration): The House Transportation Committee heard HB 1103 this week. Counties in southwest Colorado passed an ordinance that requires off highway vehicle (OHV) users to register the vehicles, have driver's licenses and wear safety gear while operating the vehicle. Unfortunately, the Division of Parks and Wildlife decided that the ordinance disqualified the counties for the grant program that helps pay for trail maintenance. This bill creates an option for local governments, allowing them to require registration and safety equipment on OHVs. The local requirements would not disqualify the counties from the grants program. The committee passed the bill on a unanimous vote.

