



COLORADO

Department of Transportation

Office of Policy and Government Relations

DATE: April 10, 2015
TO: Transportation Commissioners, Executive Director, Executive Management Team, Branch Managers, and Office Directors
FROM: Andy Karsian, Office of Policy & Government Relations
RE: Weekly Legislative Report – 2015 Session of the Colorado General Assembly

Overview

The House debated and passed a \$25 billion state budget this week. Although they did not debate the budget bill as long as the Senate did last week, the House approved more amendments to the budget (see below). Now that the Legislature has an idea of how much money they are able to spend under the TABOR cap, the legislative priorities for both Houses become clear.

Legislators, however, continue to jockey for what remains of the funding in the bill. Administration priorities such as workforce development and a repeat DUI felony are two major policy initiatives receiving funds. Still up for debate are the numerous bills stacked up in the Appropriations committees of both Houses. A variety of legislators heard good and bad news this morning when the Appropriations committees heard more than 55 bills in the early Friday morning hours. There was plenty of last minute negotiations as legislators tried to convince committee members to fund their bills and that their policy was worth a coveted allocation.

In addition to the Long Bill debate, the Senate continued to sit on the I-70 tire tread bill, laying it over while leadership debated various proposed amendments and whether to offer them. The Governor signed HB-1046, CDOT Contract Limit Waiver, and CDOT's own Scott McDaniel was present at the signing (see attached photo)! Finally, a special thank you to Louis Barella for his capital construction sleuthing, to Patty O'Halloran for compiling information on professional organization memberships, and to all the regional managers and staff that answer the weekly questions coming from under the dome about projects around the state. Thank you all.

Legislation

CDOT continues to track bills for possible direct or indirect impacts to its employees, or the state's transportation network. In the next few weeks legislators will negotiate a state budget and prepare to introduce a slew of late bills. Some key bill updates are below.

Senate Bill 15-234 (Long Appropriation Bill). This week the House debated the Long Bill and amendments concerning transportation included funding for the Southwest Chief rail line, and an amendment asking CDOT to participate in an economic development study of the US50 corridor from Salida to Kansas. Members approved three of these amendments. As there is no line item for the US50 study in the Long Bill, CDOT is asking that it be removed during conference committee. Members also approved \$1M from the General Fund to help pay for costs associated with the Southwest Chief rail line. The most disturbing, was a cash grab from CDOT's \$500K capital construction budget to also pay for the Southwest Chief. CDOT questions the legality of this change and is working with the JBC members to remove this amendment from the Long Bill during conference committee next week.

If you have any questions on these or any other legislative issues please contact Andy Karsian at 303-757-9073. Weekly memos and our bill tracking chart are available online at: <http://www.coloradodot.info/about/governmentrelations/state-government-liaison>.

