



COLORADO

Department of Transportation

Office of Policy and Government Relations

DATE: April 17, 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

More than 160 bills remain for legislators to act upon as the clock counts down the days. CDOT continues to be a part of many of the ongoing conversations regarding policy decisions on vehicles, funding, tire treads and more.

This week under the dome the House transportation committee heard HB 1003, Safe Routes to School Funding. The bill sponsor, the advocates and CDOT have worked to try and secure infrastructure and non-infrastructure funding for this program (see below). On a different bill, the hard work of many stakeholders suffered a major setback. Instead of requiring traction control devices during snowstorms, the bill now requires a study over the interim (see below).

The Legislature did do some very positive things this week, first they passed a state budget, and second, they confirmed CDOT's Executive Director, Shailen Bhatt.

Finally, Governor Hickenlooper presented a five point plan to minimize the impacts of the TABOR limits. First, focus TABOR refunds on working and middle class families; second, change the hospital provider fee to an enterprise freeing up more room under the TABOR cap; third, free up revenues to ensure SB 228 funding in future years; fourth, add \$50M to the K-12 budget; and fifth, find a way to reimburse the \$75M swept from severance tax and the hospital provider fee to balance the budgets during the recession.

Legislation

House Bill 15-1003 (Safe Routes to School). This CDOT administered program relied on federal funds until a few years ago when that funding was cut. Now, Colorado is looking to find money to continue the successful program. HB 1003 originally asked CDOT to provide \$3M from CDOT's budget to pay for the program; however, in committee this week, the sponsor changed the funding to \$700K from the general fund for non-infrastructure projects. CDOT has spoken in favor of providing infrastructure funds from the CDOT budget and the Transportation Commission is currently examining where to find those funds. Thanks to CDOT's own Leslie Feuerborn for her excellent testimony in committee this week!

House Bill 15-1173 (I-70 Winter Driving Tire Treads). Although readers have seen multiple articles about this bill, it has not finished its tumultuous journey through the Capitol quite yet. This week on second readings in the House, and after passing the Transportation committee with a unanimous vote, an amendment was added to include eight additional mountain passes. To make matters even stranger, on third readings, when substantive amendments are never offered, a substantive amendment changed the entire language of the bill turning it into a study for the interim. The bill now goes to a conference committee where legislators will need four of the six members to vote on returning the bill back to the House version. If not, either the bill will die or there will be another study of the impacts of snowy weather on passenger vehicles along the I-70 corridor.

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>.

