



COLORADO

Department of Transportation

Office of Policy and Government Relations

DATE: April 15, 2016
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 – 2016 Session of the Colorado General Assembly

Overview

The General Assembly entered the final phase of the legislative session this week. The budget passed and is heading to the Governor's desk, however, there are still 377 bills in play. The legislators have only 26 more days to hear and vote on the remainder of these bills. Many of the bills that CDOT is working on will now move out of the Appropriations committees now that the Long Bill is finished. The House Appropriations committee, for example, had 27 bills to hear Friday morning. The Senate Appropriations committee had 15 bills. The limited time left in the session means the days get longer as the members debate legislation into the night. There are now 628 introduced bills to date, 144 bills died and so far the Governor signed 86. This leaves a significant amount of legislation in the pipeline.

As always, CDOT will continue to make sure the Department is at the table and working hard to ensure your voices are heard.

Legislation

CDOT is tracking 44 bills for possible direct or indirect impacts to its employees, or the state's transportation network. Bills the Legislature heard, or introduced, this week include:

House Bill 16-1325 (Election Messages on CDOT Variable Message Signs). This bill required CDOT to display election, primary and caucus messages on the department's variable message signs. The intent was to increase voter turnout, which was 54% in 2014, by reminding the driving public of the various election dates. The bill specified that the department did not need to display the messages until it received permission from the Federal Highway Transportation Administration. Prior to the committee hearing CDOT asked the FHWA whether this legislation would be permitted under the MUTCD guidelines; the FHWA said no. The bill sponsor tried to amend CDOT out of the bill and sought to use RTD's signs instead; however on a close vote, that amendment failed and on the following vote the bill failed as well.

House Bill 16-1298 (Bridge and Vehicle Length and Height). This Department priority bill codifies some changes made in the federal FAST transportation bill. The bill updates state statutory language regarding some specific truck weights and heights to mirror the new federal limits. Additionally, the bill clarifies that trucks in Colorado may be higher than 13' and that CDOT may publish a map indicating the bridges that are lower than 14'6" instead of publishing a map including all the bridges above that height. The bill passed unanimously out of the Senate Transportation Committee and was placed on the consent calendar. The bill passed the Senate on Friday and is heading to the Governor's desk.

House Bill 16-1304 (CDOT Community Conversations). This bill requires CDOT to conduct fifteen public meetings, one in each of the transportation planning regions, to discuss project prioritization and possible funding options. The meetings could supplement an existing educational and outreach plan CDOT has for the summer. The bill's timeline for the meetings includes fifteen meetings in four months. The bill passed 10-3 out of the House Transportation committee and is heading to House Appropriations.

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>.

