



**COLORADO**

Department of Transportation

Office of Policy and Government Relations

**DATE:** January 27, 2017  
**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 - 2017 Session of the Colorado General Assembly

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## Overview

The hard work of the session began this week, however, the pace was less hectic than other years at this time. One reason is both chambers are managing their calendars well. Another reason is every legislator gets five bills to run each year, two of those bills must be introduced by the beginning of the session. The deadline for the other three was today, the 27<sup>th</sup>. If 80% of the legislators submit their last three bills at this time, because not all of them use their full five bills, then there will be 240 new bills introduced all at once. Transportation funding continues to be on everyone's mind, and there are at least four financing bill drafts circulating. Leadership, however, granted those legislators with funding bills late bill status, in order to continue the negotiations towards a comprehensive funding bill.

## Legislation

As of today, CDOT is tracking 21 bills for possible direct or indirect impacts on CDOT, its employees, or the state's transportation network. Below are summaries of the few bills heard this week.

***House Bill 17-1031 (Hearings on Transportation Commission Districts)***. This follow-up bill from last year's study on the Transportation Commission boundaries passed out of the House Transportation Committee unanimously with no testimony and no amendments. The bill requires five meetings around the state, one in each geographical quadrant and one in Denver, to present the findings of last year's study and to gather public input and reaction to the commission boundaries and transportation needs, in general.

***Senate Bill 17-27 (Increase Penalty for Texting While Driving)***. This bill survived the feared Senate State Affairs committee on Wednesday. Motorcyclists who lost loved ones to distracted drivers gave emotional testimonials as to the need to raise the fine, one of the lowest in the country at \$50. The State Patrol and CDOT testified in support illustrating the increasing number of distracted driving crashes. CDOT highlighted a possibility to amend the bill that would make Colorado eligible for federal funds. This testimony, and the pervasiveness of distracted drivers in every part of Colorado, convinced the committee members to delay voting on the bill for a week while stakeholders continue to negotiate. The bill will be heard next Wednesday. If it passes State Affairs, the bill will still have a long road ahead of it. It will have to go through the Finance and Appropriations committees before the full Senate is able to debate it.

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 is also [available online](#).

