



DATE: January 24, 2019
TO: Transportation Commissioners, Executive Director, Executive Management Team, Branch Managers, and Office Directors
FROM: Andy Karsian, Office of Policy & Government Relations
RE: Legislative Update

While it is reasonable to think everyone is prepped and ready at the beginning of the legislative session, the first ten-day period is the time when people get their legs ready for the remaining 110-day marathon. State departments provided plenty of annual reports to committees, both Houses swore in new members, and committee membership and schedules have been finalized. Legislators introduced 277 bills already, and with another legislative deadline coming, there will be a slew of additional bills introduced soon. With these initial days behind, the work begins in earnest. Already two bills CDOT supports moved out of committee on unanimous votes -HB 1030 (Truck Permits) and SB17 (P3 Reports). Coming next week, committees will hear more bills, and CDOT will be involved in discussions concerning biofuel mandates, sales tax revenue for transportation, modernizing disabled parking signs, and confirming two new members of CDOT's Colorado Aeronautics Board.

Legislation

As of today, CDOT is tracking 20 bills for possible direct or indirect impacts to CDOT, its employees, and the state's transportation network. Below are summaries of a few bills introduced or heard this week.

Senate Bill 20-038 (Statewide Biodiesel Mandate):

Biofuels are better for the environment and help reduce air pollution along the Front Range, which consistently flirts with non-attainment of federal air quality standards. CDOT's heavy fleet, however, will be impacted by blending biodiesel into fuel use. This legislation that came from an interim energy committee requires a 5% biodiesel blend by June 2021 and a 10% blend by 2023. This requirement applies to all diesel sales. CDOT is working with the bill sponsors to amend the bill to narrow the blends to two specific kinds of diesel that are not as prone to gel in colder weather. Other departments have concerns about the impact on price and supply. The bill has not yet been scheduled for a hearing.

House Bill 19-1145 (Strengthening Move Over Law):

Colorado motorists are required to move over a lane if there is an emergency vehicle or road maintenance workers on the side of the road. If a driver cannot move over an entire lane, they must slow down to a safe speed. What constitutes a safe speed is the subject of this bill. It would require vehicles to slow down ten mph in speed zones up to 45 mph, and in those above 45 blends mph, drivers must slow 20 mph. Other states have enacted similar laws, and CDOT supports making the current law stronger.

House Bill 19-1151 (Expand Authority for Regional Transportation Improvements):

As a result of state ballot measures for transportation funding failing multiple times, some local governments are advocating that they should have more authority to generate and control funding in the future. This bill would allow existing TPRs and MPOs around the state to ask voters for ongoing funding for transportation projects, something they currently may not do. This authority would mirror the Regional Transportation Authorities' (RTA) powers, but without the administrative hurdles of forming a new RTA. The sponsors of the bill, the Chairs of the House and Senate Transportation Committees, have said repeatedly that the introduced version of the bill is not going to be the final version. The main concern CDOT and others have is this bill would allow the bulk of transportation funding going to urban areas creating inequities statewide.