

Transportation Legislation Review Committee

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Committee Charge

Pursuant to Section 43-2-145, C.R.S., the Transportation Legislation Review Committee (TLRC) is authorized to give guidance and direction to:

- the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) in the development of the state transportation system and to provide legislative oversight of the development;
- the Colorado Department of Revenue (DOR) in the licensing of drivers, and registration and titling of motor vehicles; and
- any state agency or political subdivision of the state that regulates motor vehicles or traffic, including penalties imposed for violating traffic statutes and rules.

The committee must meet at least once each year to propose and review transportation, traffic, and motor vehicle legislation. It is permitted to review any phase of operations of the CDOT, a public highway authority, or a regional transportation authority, and may require these entities to prepare and adopt long-range plans and complete financial or performance audits.

Committee Activities

The committee held four meetings during the 2014 interim. Briefings and presentations were made by state departments, local governments, transit authorities, public highway authorities, transportation industry associations, and members of the public on a wide range of subjects, including:

- highway corridor maintenance and construction;
- Colorado's aviation industry;
- distracted driving;
- oversize and overweight permits;
- license plates; and
- regulation of motor carriers by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC).

This interim the committee also toured a precast concrete manufacturing facility, Denver Union Station, and the Denver International Airport (DIA).

The following subsections discuss the TLRC's activities during the 2014 interim.

CDOT corridor update. Representatives of CDOT gave an overview of the department and its public engagement process, and provided an update on the I-70 mountain corridor. The panel discussed methods for reducing congestion, how existing infrastructure may be preserved, and the department's budget relative to federal funding. The panel stated that CDOT's goal in the I-70 mountain corridor is to reduce congestion, and outlined plans to reduce travel times by providing peak period shoulder lanes.

Aviation industry. The committee heard from representatives of DIA, Rocky Mountain Metropolitan Airport, Yampa Valley Regional Airport, Steamboat Springs Airport, Centennial Airport, and CDOT's Division of Aeronautics about operations and economic impacts, passenger traffic, and airspace capacity at, and the economic impacts of, Colorado's airports. The panel reported that there are currently 74 airports in Colorado available for public use, of which 13 are commercial, 50 are publicly owned, and 11 are privately owned. Statewide aviation projects were also discussed, including DIA's South Terminal Redevelopment Program, which will open in 2015.

Distracted driving. The committee heard testimony from the Colorado State Patrol (CSP), insurance companies, and automobile groups on distracted driving. The panel discussed the main types of distraction encountered while driving — visual distractions, manual distractions, and cognitive distractions. The panel noted that in 2013, the CSP investigated 6,390 “front to rear” crashes, almost all of which were the result of distracted driving. The committee also heard information related to the difficulty of issuing citations for cell phone use and the need for public education and awareness campaigns.

Driver's licenses. The committee heard from representatives of the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) in the DOR about the DMV's strategic plan to reduce office wait times and improve customer service by expanding appointment waitlists, tracking wait times, allowing more online renewals, and using new technology. The committee also heard information on the implementation of Senate Bill 13-251, which allows qualified individuals who are unable to demonstrate lawful presence in the United States to obtain a three-year driver's license.

License plates. Representatives of the DMV presented on current license plate designs available to Colorado drivers. The panel noted that Colorado has 138 different license plates and discussed issuance requirements. The committee received information on the print-on-demand process for license plates and temporary license plate tags. As a result of the testimony and discussion, the committee recommends Bill A, which directs DOR to issue firefighter special license plates for motorcycles, passenger cars, trucks, or recreational motor vehicles that do not exceed 16,000 pounds empty weight.

Oversize and overweight commercial vehicle permits. The committee heard from a working group on oversize and overweight commercial vehicles that was convened at the request of the TLRC in the 2013 interim. Representatives of CDOT, Colorado Motor Carriers, Colorado Counties Inc., and the Colorado Municipal League updated the committee on CDOT's new permitting system for oversize and overweight vehicles and discussed how it will streamline the permitting process. The panel stated that the goal of the permitting system is to make information available to as many entities as possible. The panelists stated that the system, which is expected to be launched in October 2014, will be entirely web-based and accessible at any hour of the day.

Public Utilities Commission (PUC) regulation of motor carriers. Representatives of the PUC gave an overview of the commission and commented on how the PUC has been working with the transportation industry and law enforcement to perform investigations and enforce compliance of motor carriers. The committee heard information about the PUC's role in regulating transportation network companies and the implementation of Senate Bill 14-125, which created a limited regulatory structure for these companies.

Other. The committee heard testimony on other topics, including transit and rail, the role of the High-Performance Transportation Enterprise (HPTE) as a financing entity, and the Safe Routes to School Program. As a result of the testimony and discussion, the committee recommends Bill B, which requires CDOT to award grants under the Safe Routes to School program using state moneys available to the department in a total amount of at least \$3 million for the 2015-16 fiscal year.

Committee Recommendations

Bill A — Firefighter Motorcycle License Plate. Bill A requires the DOR to issue the current firefighter group special license plate to motorcyclists upon receiving proof that the applicant is an active, volunteer, or retired firefighter. Under current law, the firefighter group special license plate is available for passenger cars, trucks, and recreational vehicles not exceeding 16,000 pounds empty weight; however, the plate is not currently available for motorcycles.

Bill B — Funding for Safe Transportation to Schools. Bill B requires CDOT, under the Safe Routes to School Program, to award at least \$3 million in grants to political subdivisions of the state for projects that will improve the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists in school areas. The grants must be awarded during FY 2015-16. The bill requires that state moneys be used for making grant awards of at least \$3 million, unless CDOT receives federal funds specifically for the Safe Routes to School program. If CDOT receives federal funds during FY 2015-16 for the program, the \$3 million requirement is reduced by the amount of federal moneys received.