

Transportation Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5255

AN ACT CONCERNING RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF

Title: TRANSPORTATION.

Vote Date: 3/24/2022

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/7/2022

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Transportation Committee
Rep. Mitch Bolinsky, 106th District

REASONS FOR BILL:

The purpose of this legislation is to enact a number of recommendations by the Department of Transportation (DOT). These recommendations include changes to DOT's authority and regulations pertaining to the operation of motor vehicles. Increased road safety will also result in access to greater federal funding.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Department of Administrative Services (DAS): DAS supports the proposed changes in Section 8. DAS believes eliminating the affidavit requirement vendors must comply with when the state purchases over fifty thousand dollars in goods or services from a vendor will increase the efficiency of government. The current requirement hurts small and minority owned businesses that may not have the services immediately available to comply with this regulation.

Joseph Giulietti, Commissioner, Department of Transportation (DOT): DOT submitted testimony for the following sections: (1) and (2) This section would prohibit the possession of open alcohol containers in the passenger area of a motor vehicle. The state loses three percent of the National Highway System and Interstate Maintenance funds from the federal government every year for noncompliance with federal regulations that prohibit open alcohol containers in motor vehicles. (3) This would prohibit the parking of motor vehicles within twenty-five feet of certain crosswalks. This increases pedestrian safety which is important for those with impaired vision or mobility. (4) and (5) This would give DOT the ability to change

the speed limits on highways during certain emergency situations. Reducing speed limits during inclement weather events will improve driver safety and reduce the chance of vehicle accidents.

(6) This would allow DOT to indemnify railroad companies when the Department purchases sections of railroads. This would allow for the purchase of a section of the Connecticut Southern Railroad in the Town of Manchester. (8-10) This section eliminates a requirement of notarized signatures. DOT believes this will streamline the contracting process which will save time and resources. (11) and (12) This allows DOT to enter private property when an emergency is declared. While the Department may receive permission from property owners by asking, sometimes it can be difficult to receive a prompt response if an owner cannot be contacted or if there are multiple property owners. (13) This section increases the fees for oversize and overweight truck permits. Funds collected from these fees would be directed to a new auto-routing and auto-issuing permits system which would allow for the purchasing of permits electronically.

(14-16) This removes the requirement of a drug influence evaluation within two hours of a traffic stop when the operator of a motor vehicle is suspected of being under the influence of drugs. The word "passenger" is also deleted in the relevant statutes. Boating under the influence is also added to the Accelerated Rehabilitation Program statute. These revisions are necessary to increase driver safety. (17) This would allow DOT to condemn property and acquire it for transportation purposes. This provision is necessary because it clarifies the Department may acquire property for the construction of greenways. (18) This would allow for truck platooning on limited access highways within the state. Thirty-two other states allow for platooning and the private sector is interested in testing the concept. (19) This would allow DOT to enforce right-of-way encroachments. The Department is currently attempting to address a number of encroachments and would like to deter future ones.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Jason Bowsza, Secretary, Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG): CRCOG submitted testimony in support of Sections 1 and 2. The council supports prohibiting passengers from being in possession of open alcohol containers while in a motor vehicle. They cite that Connecticut is one of only twelve states that has not enacted this legislation and is also losing funding because of federal regulations that penalize states that allow passengers to have open containers of alcohol.

Tracy Noble, Manager of Public and Government Affairs, American Automobile Club Alliance (AAA): AAA offered support for Sections 4 and 5. They cite a finding from the Federal Highway Administration that variable speed limits are a "proven safety countermeasure" and that they could reduce traffic accidents, injuries, and fatalities.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Joe Sculley, President, Motor Transport Association of Connecticut (MTAC): MTAC submitted testimony in opposition to Section 4. The feasibility of this provision was called into questions since Connecticut does not have electronic speed limit signs currently. MTAC also believes that the manual installation of temporary speed limit signs would take an "incredible

amount of work” and could endanger those doing the installation, since it would be done during weather emergencies.

Reported by: Glenn Prushinski, Assistant Clerk Date: 4/1/2022
Phil Mainiero, Committee Clerk