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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

### **HB 6746 (as amended by House "A")\***

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING WRONG-WAY DRIVING DETECTION AND PREVENTION.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill requires the Department of Transportation (DOT) to expand its efforts to implement wrong-way driver countermeasures. These efforts must include the following:

1. installing wrong-way driving detection and notification systems (i.e., systems capable of alerting drivers with flashing lights when they are going the wrong way and notifying law enforcement upon detecting a wrong-way driver) on at least 120 highway exit ramps that DOT determines are high-risk for wrong-way drivers (see BACKGROUND);
2. establishing a pilot program at high-risk exit ramps that the department determines are appropriate for testing systems that also broadcast alerts about a wrong-way driver's presence on electronic highway message boards (i.e., "wrong-way driving detection, notification, and broadcasting systems"); and
3. giving a grant, from available resources for implementing wrong-way driving countermeasures, to UConn to test and analyze the use of directional rumble strips to alert a driver through vibration and sound that he or she is driving the wrong way.

The bill requires DOT, by January 1, 2025, to submit reports to the Transportation Committee on (1) the pilot program's results and recommendations for the broader use of wrong-way driving detection, notification, and broadcasting systems and (2) UConn's analysis results and recommendations on installing directional rumble strips.

Additionally, the bill addresses wrong-way driving public awareness and education by requiring that information on ways to reduce wrong-way driving incidents and information on actions drivers should take when encountering a wrong-way driver be included in (1) a DOT public awareness campaign and (2) driver education program curriculum. The Department of Motor Vehicles must include this information in its regulations on driving school instructional standards.

\*House Amendment "A" (1) eliminates the requirement that DOT install rumble strips on exit ramps and instead requires the department to give a grant to UConn to test them and (2) creates a pilot program to test wrong-way driving detection and notification systems that broadcast alerts to highway message boards, rather than requiring all systems to be capable of doing so.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2023, except that the pilot program and UConn grant provisions are effective upon passage.

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Bonding for Wrong-Way Driving Technology***

The 2020 bond act authorized \$1 million in special tax obligation (STO) bonds to purchase signs that flash a warning when they detect a vehicle entering the road in the wrong direction and install them on exit ramps on interstate highways that are prone to accidents (PA 20-1, § 40). PA 22-118, § 322, authorized an additional \$20 million in STO bonds for DOT to purchase and install advanced wrong-way driving technology.

### ***DOT's Wrong-Way Driver Flasher Pilot Program***

As part of its wrong-way flasher pilot program, DOT analyzed 700 highway ramps, considering risk factors including (1) multiple off-ramps that meet at the same location, (2) wrong-way event history, (3) presence of an alcohol-serving business within one-half mile of the ramp, (4) presence of a raised median or guardrail separating the on-and-off ramps, and (5) lack of sufficient highway lighting.

Through this analysis, DOT identified 236 locations as high-risk for wrong way driving events, developed a ranked priority list, and chose

an initial 16 locations for installation through the pilot program in 2023. These installations include a 360-degree camera to detect vehicles and large, flashing wrong-ways signs that activate to warn the driver. The department plans to install this technology on more ramps from the priority list after the initial pilot project locations, and future installations will add the ability to notify the Connecticut State Police in real time.

***Related Bill***

sSB 980 (File 731), reported favorably by the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee, authorizes \$20 million in STO bonds in each of FYs 24 and 25 for DOT to purchase and install advanced wrong-way driving technology.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Transportation Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 35    Nay 0    (03/10/2023)