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## OLR Bill Analysis

### HB 6746

#### ***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 in Connecticut. These efforts must include the following:

1. installing “wrong-way driving detection and notification systems” on at least 120 highway exit ramps that it determines are high-risk for wrong-way drivers (see BACKGROUND);
2. installing rumble strips on exit ramps, in a way that will cause tactile vibration and audible rumbling when a driver goes the wrong way on these ramps; and
3. implementing a public awareness campaign to educate the public on (a) ways to reduce wrong-way driving incidents and (b) the actions drivers should take when they encounter a wrong-way driver.

The bill also requires that driver education programs give instruction on ways to reduce wrong-way driving incidents and the actions drivers should take when they encounter a wrong-way driver. The Department of Motor Vehicles must include this instruction in its regulations on driving school instructional standards.

Under the bill, “wrong-way driving detection and notification systems” are those capable of (1) alerting drivers, using flashing lights, when they are going the wrong way; (2) notifying a law enforcement unit when it detects a wrong-way driver; and (3) broadcasting a notice on electronic message boards along the highway that a wrong-way

driver is present.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2023

## **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 installing 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.

## **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Transportation Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 35    Nay 0    (03/10/2023)