



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 275

January Session, 2023

House Bill No. 6746

House of Representatives, March 28, 2023

The Committee on Transportation reported through REP. LEMAR of the 96th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING WRONG-WAY DRIVING DETECTION AND PREVENTION.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2023*) (a) For the purposes of this
2 section, (1) "wrong-way driving detection and notification system"
3 means a system capable of (A) alerting a motor vehicle operator with
4 the use of flashing lights when such operator is driving the wrong way,
5 (B) notifying a law enforcement unit when a wrong-way operator is
6 detected, and (C) broadcasting the presence of a wrong-way operator
7 on electronic message boards along the highway, (2) "law enforcement
8 unit" has the same meaning as provided in section 7-294a of the general
9 statutes, and (3) "highway" has the same meaning as provided in section
10 14-1 of the general statutes.

11 (b) The Department of Transportation shall expand efforts to
12 implement wrong-way driving countermeasures throughout the state.
13 Such efforts shall include, but need not be limited to: (1) The installation
14 of wrong-way driving detection and notification systems on at least one

15 hundred twenty highway exit ramps that the department determines
16 are at high risk for motor vehicle operators driving in the wrong
17 direction; (2) the installation of rumble strips on highway exit ramps in
18 such a manner to cause a tactile vibration and audible rumbling when
19 an operator drives the wrong way on such ramps; and (3) a public
20 awareness campaign to educate the public concerning ways to reduce
21 incidents of operators driving in the wrong direction and actions to take
22 when an operator encounters a motor vehicle being operated in the
23 wrong direction.

24 Sec. 2. Section 14-36f of the general statutes is repealed and the
25 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2023*):

26 The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall adopt regulations, in
27 accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, governing the
28 establishment, conduct and scope of driver education programs in
29 secondary schools of this state, subject to the requirements of section 14-
30 36e. Such regulations shall (1) permit any local or regional board of
31 education or private secondary school to contract with a licensed
32 drivers' school approved by the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles for the
33 behind-the-wheel instruction of such driver education program and
34 instruction therein may be given by such school's driving instructors
35 who are licensed by the Department of Motor Vehicles, (2) require that
36 the classroom instruction of any such driver education program include
37 (A) a discussion concerning highway work zone safety and the
38 responsibilities of an operator of a motor vehicle under section 14-212d,
39 and (B) a discussion concerning ways to reduce incidents of operators
40 driving in the wrong direction and actions to take when an operator
41 encounters a motor vehicle being operated in the wrong direction, and
42 (3) except for instruction offered pursuant to section 14-36j, permit a
43 class or classroom instruction to be offered in person in a congregate
44 setting, through distance learning or through a combination of both in-
45 person and distance learning, provided such distance learning has
46 interactive components such as mandatory interactions, participation or
47 testing.

48 Sec. 3. Section 14-78 of the general statutes is repealed and the
 49 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2023*):

50 The commissioner may adopt regulations, in accordance with the
 51 provisions of chapter 54, regarding the conduct of drivers' schools and
 52 instructor license requirements. Such regulations shall (1) establish the
 53 conduct of drivers' schools, including, but not limited to, (A)
 54 requirements as to the inspection of the vehicles used by the drivers'
 55 schools in the conduct of their business, (B) instructional standards and
 56 procedures, including instruction of not less than fifteen minutes
 57 concerning the responsibilities of an operator of a motor vehicle under
 58 subsection (b) of section 14-223 and the penalty for a violation of the
 59 provisions of said subsection, instruction concerning highway work
 60 zone safety and the responsibilities of an operator of a motor vehicle
 61 under section 14-212d, and instruction concerning ways to reduce
 62 incidents of operators driving in the wrong direction and actions to take
 63 when an operator encounters a motor vehicle being operated in the
 64 wrong direction, (C) the administration of a test at the conclusion of each
 65 class, (D) the posting of rates charged for instruction, and (E) the general
 66 form in which records concerning persons under instruction and those
 67 who have completed their course of instruction shall be kept and, when
 68 required, the method of transmission to the commissioner, (2) except as
 69 required pursuant to section 14-36j, permit a class or classroom
 70 instruction to be offered in person in a congregate setting, through
 71 distance learning or through a combination of both in-person and
 72 distance learning, provided such distance learning has interactive
 73 components such as mandatory interactions, participation or testing,
 74 and (3) establish the requirements for a person to receive a license as an
 75 instructor in accordance with section 14-73. On and after October 1,
 76 2010, the commissioner shall not issue a license that is limited to
 77 classroom instruction. Any person who was issued such limited license
 78 prior to October 1, 2010, may maintain and renew such license.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>October 1, 2023</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2023</i>	14-36f
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2023</i>	14-78

TRA *Joint Favorable*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill requires the Department of Transportation (DOT) to install various wrong-way driving countermeasures on select highway exits. There is no additional cost associated with this because a wrong-way countermeasures program of \$20 million was authorized in PA 22-118 and funds were fully allocated for this purpose in July 2022. No change to debt service is anticipated as all authorized bonds have already been made available to the program and it is expected that DOT will use those funds for the requirements of the bill.

Other parts of the bill, including a public awareness campaign by DOT and an update to driving school instructional standards for the Department of Motor Vehicles, are not expected to have a fiscal impact because these activities are part of current agency operations and expertise.

The Out Years

None

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)