

Transportation Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6746

AN ACT CONCERNING WRONG-WAY DRIVING DETECTION AND

Title: PREVENTION.

Vote Date: 3/10/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/27/2023

File No.: 275

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Transportation Committee

CO-SPONSORS:

Rep. David K. Labriola, 131st Dist.

Rep. Derell Wilson, 46th Dist.

Rep. Christopher Poulos, 81st Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

There has been a recent uptick in fatal crashes caused by wrong-way drivers which has raised concerns about public safety from the state's residents. This bill aims to combat this problem to improve public safety on Connecticut's roads.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Garrett Eucalitto, Commissioner of CTDOT

Stating that the safety of CT's drivers is at the top of the department's priorities, the CTDOT is continually investigating how to decrease the likelihood of wrong-way driver crashes as they often result in fatalities. The Commissioner says that over 80% of wrong-way drivers are impaired in some way or form and that these incidents typically occur between the hours of 11 pm and 4 am. The Commissioner also states "CTDOT conducted an analysis of over 700 ramp locations in Connecticut, especially where on and offramps are located on the same side of the roadway and has identified 236 locations as high-risk. Research has shown that on and off-ramps on the same side of the roadway, and ramps near establishments serving alcohol, have a higher risk of experiencing a wrong way event." Going over some countermeasures the state could implement he says, "CTDOT has examined several technology options, and we have chosen one that will allow us to use solar/battery and/or

wired electricity for our wrong way flasher pilot program and for the installation of future active Wrong Way Driving countermeasure installations. This technology will include important features such as the use of thermal cameras to verify if wrong-way drivers do not self-correct after seeing wrong-way driving countermeasures, the ability to examine snapshots or video streams of wrong-way vehicles entering the highway, the ability to notify CTDOT and CT State Police of wrong-way vehicles in real-time, and the ability for CTDOT to privately contract the maintenance of the entire wrong way driver system. In addition to the wrong-way flashers, CTDOT is also adding retro-reflective strips to guide rails around the state. These appear to drivers as white/yellow when heading the right way and reflect red to drivers heading the wrong way. We are also adding in-pavement markers (in-laid reflectors) that will outline the 2 white directional arrows at the end of off-ramps and on the edge line near the guide rail. We also have prepared a media campaign that will include highway billboards and digital advertising to bring attention to the tragic increase in wrong way driving crashes.”

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Vincent J. Candelora, House Minority Leader

Supports this bill stating the danger posed by wrong-way drivers is on the rise citing that in 2021 it resulted in 4 fatal crashes, and in 2022 that rose to 13 total crashes with 23 fatalities. He hopes the provisions in this bill will work to eliminate wrong-way crashes in Connecticut. He emphasizes the importance of rumble strips and public awareness saying, “Rumble strips on exit ramps provide two types of warnings to wrong-way drivers. When drivers run over rumble strips heading in the opposite direction, they receive an aural warning (louder ambient noise) as well as a physical warning (vibration through the tires). Conversely, a vehicle traveling in the correct direction will not receive an aural warning. Rumble strips along with the visual warning provided by flashing lights should provide sufficient warning to drivers that they are entering the wrong way on a highway and should hopefully cause them to stop driving in the wrong direction. These highway notification and detection systems play a critical role in preventing collisions due to wrong-way driving.”

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed

Reported by: Nathan Vieira

Date: 3/16/2023