

OLD CARS AND NEW LAWS

PLUS WHAATSUUP HERE AND THERE



By Larry Becker

April 2012

The following state bills are not laws at this time. They have recently been introduced and are currently under consideration by the respective state legislators.

On March 14th, the U.S. Senate voted to overhaul transportation programs and keep aid flowing to thousands of construction projects while strengthening highway and auto safety. This also gives the government the power to collect \$110 million a day in federal gasoline and diesel taxes, the main source of revenue for highway and transit programs. The Senate measure would spend \$1 billion over about two years. The measure would reduce the number of federal transportation programs by roughly two-thirds in an effort to eliminate duplication. Senators preserved bicycle, pedestrian, safe routes to schools and rails-to-trails programs. For transit commuters, the bill would extend, back to Jan. 1, a tax break that allows the deduction of up to \$240 a month tax free from their paychecks for expenses incurred traveling to work. That had expired at the end of 2011. The House has not yet acted on the bill and there is expected to be some changes and amendments before the Senate and House reach an agreement on the bill. Some members of Congress would like to strip funding for projects as biking trails from the bill. Bicyclists and recreational advocates around the nation are writing, calling and e-mailing their Senators and Representatives to save the bill from the cuts.

A new report by the National Highway Transportation Safety Agency using police-reported crashes show that women are at a greater risk of being hurt, particularly when they're not behind the wheel. While females comprise one-quarter of all driver fatalities, they make up half of all passengers killed, according to NHTSA.

State lawmakers across the U.S. are crafting legislation that would add military service to veteran's driver licenses so they will have to carry official discharge papers to prove their service. It's a shortcut that legislators say could come in handy, from securing state veterans' claims to simply getting a military discount at a hotel or retailer.

A California rule assigning higher carbon scores to fuel produced outside the state has drawn the ire of the ethanol industry and the Midwestern states that produce most of the ethanol in the U.S. At least seven states, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, North Dakota and South Dakota – are opposing California's effort to enforce the mandate, which critics say threatens the renewable fuel business in the nation's grain belt. In December, a federal judge blocked California's Air Resource Board from enforcing the regulation, which encourages refiners to blend gasoline with ethanol produced in Brazil or California. The California rule considers Midwestern ethanol to have a larger carbon footprint. The judge said the rule unconstitutionally interferes with interstate commerce. California officials are appealing the decision.

Collector Car Appreciation Day is July 13. The date marks the third commemoration in what has become an annual event to raise awareness of the vital role automotive restoration and collection plays in American society. In previous years, the U.S. Senate helped launch national Collector Car Appreciation Day by passing a resolution at SEMA's request.

ALABAMA

The city of Dothan is considering a proposal to allow red-light cameras at no fewer than 10 intersections. Police reported that running red lights and failure to yield were the prime cause of 187 of the 2,935 accidents from 2009 to 2011.

ARKANSAS

The state Highway and Transportation Department plans to hire a consultant to study whether the state could convert Interstate 40 from North Little Rock to Memphis into a toll road. The study was authorized by the Arkansas Highway Commission, which says more revenue is needed to pay for road improvements.

ARIZONA

State voters will not get a chance to decide whether speed cameras should be banned. The state Senate voted against a resolution to put the question on the November ballot. The state pulled its speed cameras off of highways in 2010.

CALIFORNIA

AB 1613 Assemblyman Donnelly

Existing law specifies that a certificate of compliance or noncompliance (smog inspections) is valid for 90 days. This bill would delete the requirement that the DMV require a certificate of compliance or a certificate of noncompliance with respect to smog certification upon any transfer of ownership and registration of a motor vehicle.

SB 1224 – by Senators La Malfa and Vargs

This bill would exempt all motor vehicles prior to the 1981 model-year from being inspected biennially upon renewal of registration.

SB 1203 by Sen. Calderon would offer a \$100 reward to drivers who turn in drunken drivers. The bill would require convicted drunken drivers to pay a court-ordered \$100 fee to the person who tipped police off to the drunk driver. It is not clear if the tipster would have to testify in court.

Los Angeles County officials have voted to build 831 miles of new bikeways in the next two decades. The \$331 million upgrade to the city's existing 144-mile bike network was approved at a Supervisors meeting the second week of March.

COLORADO

Legislation that originally sought to extend the emissions inspection to vehicles that are eight model years old and newer was amended and approved by the Senate Transportation Committee. Under the amendment, the bill now provides the exemption to vehicles six model years old and newer. Current law only exempts vehicles that are four model years old and newer. Even with the amendment, this is still a bill worthy of support. The bill is now being considered by the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Highway officials are ending their police pace car plan for eastbound Interstate 70 for the winter. The state Department of Transportation now plans to study the programs effectiveness. Pace cars are police cruisers driving 35 to 55 mph with lights flashing and were used to reduce congestion and crashes during ski season.

CONNECTICUT

Legislation has been introduced to increase the age requirement for vehicles eligible for registration as an “antique, rare or special-interest motor vehicles. “Under the bill, vehicles seeking registration as antique, rare or special-interest motor vehicles would be required to be at least 30 years old. Currently, vehicles 20 years old or older are eligible for this status and special license plates. For the purpose of property taxes, the bill also increases the maximum assessment of these vehicles from \$500 to \$2,000. The bill is opposed by SEMA.

D.C. WASHINGTON

In 2011, the city raised a record \$92.6 from 1.6 million parking tickets, the Washington Post reported, almost \$12 million more than in 2010. In the first 4 months of the current fiscal year, the city has netted \$31 million in parking fines.

A group in Washington D.C. is proposing that pedestrians, texting or using a hand held cellphone while crossing a street be ticketed. They say the same rule for driver’s texting or using a hand held should apply to pedestrians. Washington D.C. has more pedestrian related accidents than any other city. The group states that this is the cause of the accidents.

An additional 1,100 parking meters designated for use by handicapped drivers will be installed by April 17th in areas where there is a high demand, the Washington Post has reported. That will bring to 1,500 the number of disabled metered spaces the Transportation said. On March 22nd, the City Council temporarily halted the program, the Washington Post reported. It is not known when the program will resume.

Mayor Vincent Gray said that extra revenue is needed to close a projected \$172.1 million deficit and one of the ways is “beefed-up” enforcement of traffic violations.

HAWAII

According to last year’s INRIX National traffic Scorecard, Honolulu ranked second behind Los Angeles in the worst traffic congestion among 100 cities. The state Senate is looking at ways to ease traffic problems by improving highway and road designs.

The state is allotting more money to electric vehicles programs and extending the deadlines due to an increased demand for electric vehicles.

ILLINOIS

A bill passed by the Illinois House would require admission fees for state parks. Under the measure, Illinois would be able to charge annual fees for vehicle stickers to get into the parks and daily admission fees for pedestrians or drivers without annual passes \. The bill now goes to the Illinois State Senate.

The Illinois House Revenue and Finance Committee will consider legislation allowing the state’s Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to provide information to gas stations encouraging the stations to offer E-15 as an option to customers. The bill also allows the Department to provide information to gas stations on any financial assistance that may be available to subsidize the cost of providing E-15 blended fuel to consumers.

INDIANA

State Police made more than drunken-driving arrests during a weekend crackdown in early March. Troopers arrested 373 people for impaired driving and issued 3,717 traffic citations and 6,262 traffic warnings.

IDAHO

Texting while driving could cost drivers an \$85 fine under a bill passed by the House. On March 20th, House lawmakers voted 53 to 17 to bar motorists from using smart phones and other hand – held devices to text. The Senate has approved the plan but will need to sign off on the amendments.

KENTUCKY

The Kentucky House Transportation Committee has voted to pass a Senate bill allowing the Amish to use strips of reflective tape on the back of their horse-drawn buggies rather than those bright orange triangles. The Amish argue that God directs their safety, even on roads. They say the sign's bright color calls attention to them, which is against their religion.

LOUISIANA

The Shreveport City Council has raised fines for parking vehicles in front yards to \$100 starting June 1st for the first offense. Subsequent offenses are \$300 and \$525. The current law is not specific to yard parking and carries a \$15 fine.

MAINE

The state is phasing in a new motorcycle registration system over the next year as a result of a law that requires inspection stickers on the vehicle's plate. In order to accommodate the sticker, motorcycle registration will be changed to a fixed March expiration.

Repaving will begin in April on a 5 mile stretch of the Turnpike between West Gardner and Litchfield. Turnpike Authority spokesman Dan Morin said no major traffic problems are expected during the \$3.2 million project.

MARYLAND

SEMA worked with Delegate Kirit Reznik to amend legislation in the House and Senate that originally threatened to further limit the use of "historic motor vehicles." Under the amendment, the requirement for collector insurance was deleted. Also, a provision banning occasional use was also deleted. A new provision provided for use for obtaining repairs and routine maintenance. The amended bill requires that there be a "daily driver" registered to the same address as the historic vehicle that would be used for primary transportation.

On March 10th, the Maryland House Environmental Matters Committee decided not to move ahead with the proposed amendment at this time. Delegate Kirit Reznik will try again next year.

MICHIGAN

Legislation has been introduced that retail dealers that offer gasoline for sale to label those pumps dispensing ethanol-blended gasoline with a notice that indicates the grade of gasoline and the percentage of ethanol contained. Under current Michigan law, gasoline that contains 10% or less ethanol is not subject to the labeling requirement. The bill provides that a person who violates the labeling requirement is liable for a civil fine up to \$1,000 for each day the violation continues. The bill is receiving support from SEMA.

NEVADA

Be on the lookout for leprechauns!! In early March, Las Vegas Police Officers dressed in leprechaun costumes began a new safety campaign to test whether drivers yield to pedestrians, University of Nevada-Las Vegas State Community Partnership chief Erin Breen said police handed out tickets to motorists who failed to stop for the green clad pedestrians crossing streets. Fines are \$190 and up.

NEW JERSEY

A version of SEMA-model legislation to create a vehicle registration classification for street rods and replica custom vehicles and provide for special license plates for these vehicles has been introduced in the New Jersey Assembly. The bill defines street rods as an altered vehicle manufactured before 1948 and a custom as a vehicle at least 25 years old and manufactured after 1948. The bill allows kit cars and replica vehicles to be assigned a certificate of title bearing the same model year designation the body of the vehicle most closely resembles.

Daily parking at the Sandy Hook Park in the Gateway National Recreation area will increase from \$10 to \$15 for most vehicles. Season parking passes will cost \$75, up from the previous cost of \$50.

NORTH CAROLINA

The DMV has reported that the number of vehicles failing safety inspections tripled last year, to 1.2 million. DMV chief Mike Robertson said his agency began cracking down on garages that pass vehicles shortly after they fail at another shop.

The DMV and the Division of Air Quality recommended that emissions inspections not be required for automobiles of the three newest model year rather than eliminating inspections completely.

Next year, DMV also plans to introduce a new electronic system for renewing and issuing licenses with features that include a laser-engraved, 3D photo of the driver. Federal grants have helped pay for the Next Generation Secure Driver's License System.

OHIO

A mild winter has saved the Department of Transportation \$43 million this year after spending \$80 million last year for expenses for snow and ice. Spokesman Steve Faulkner said the savings could be used for other projects, such as resurfacing and guardrail repair.

DMV is creating the Division of Innovative Delivery, focused on finding alternative forms of funding for road and bridge projects. The department could save \$200 million annually through cost reduction, operating some rest areas as businesses and offering sponsorships and naming rights.

OREGON

Deputies following a semi truck on Interstate 5 (near Portland) and watched how drivers reacted to it issued 163 citations in two days targeting aggressive drivers. The Washington County Sheriffs Officers made 216 stops on a 7 mile stretch of highway.

PENNSYLVANIA

A ban on texting while driving has taken effect in the state. The new law carries a \$50 fine for anyone sending texts, e-mails or similar messages from their phone, computers or other devices while driving. Police can't seize the devices when they write tickets, but they can pull over anyone they notice texting.

TENNESSEE

The Federal Highway Administration authorized a project that could ease congestion on state Highway 66 at the intersection at the Interstate 40 interchange leading to the Great Smokey Mountains National Park, The proposal to build a driving diamond intersection at the crossing was given to the agency in mid-December.

The city of Kingsport is planning to build a \$300,000, 60 feet long bridge over a section of Bays Mountain Road that is slowly sliding off the mountain.

VIRGINIA

Legislation that originally threatened to provide localities with authority to raise from \$100 to \$500 the amount charged for an annual license tax for vehicles that do not display current license plates was approved by the Virginia State Legislature and sent to the governor for his signature. It has been amended to totally exempt from the license tax all vehicles and parts cars that are stored within a structure.

UTAH

Police checkpoints targeting drunk drivers may be prohibited in Utah. Rep. David Butterfield says the checkpoints violate the constitutional protections against unreasonable searches. He also says they are ineffective at catching drunk drivers, and said charges stemming from a checkpoint can be difficult to prosecute. The bill to eliminate the checkpoints has passed a House panel despite opposition from law enforcement groups and prosecutors.

WEST VIRGINIA

A bill that originally provided a fair cap on property taxes paid by owners of antique and classic motor vehicles was amended and approved by the West Virginia State Legislature on March 10th with a new \$5,000 assessed value for all of these cars. Under the version that was approved by the entire Legislature on March 10 and sent to the governor for his consideration, the actual maximum tax paid would be \$150. The bill now only benefits antique and classic vehicle owners whose vehicles are worth more than \$5,000. It would penalize antique and classic vehicle owners whose vehicles are worth less than \$5,000. Gov. Early Ray Tomblin has vetoed the bill.

WASHINGTON

The state House passed a transportation budget on March 2nd that would secure more than \$50 million over the next year for immediate transportation needs. In addition to a \$100 annual fee for electric car owners, the proposed budget would implement and raise a series of other driver-related fees. The measure has been sent to the Senate for a vote.

WISCONSIN

Legislation has been introduced to provide legal registration to hobby vehicles with a clear title, required safety equipment and in good working order. Under the bill, these registrations would be available to owners regardless of the vehicles color, former owner or previous use. In addition, the bill allows owners of government surplus (former military) vehicles the option to license them for regular uses, provided the vehicle meets the Wisconsin equipment requirements.

whatsup here and there

Fenway Park, home of the Boston Red Sox's., is being listed on the National Registry of Historic Places.

A new research study by MIT has found that drivers don't need to be texting or talking on cellphones to be distracted enough to possibly get in trouble on the road. A driver's eyes may be directed toward the road, but the mind is focused elsewhere. Getting lost in thought can be risky. The research has shown that if a motorist's mind is deeply focused on any topic- even trouble at home – they are likely to scan the road for hazards less frequently.

Rather than knocking down a tree in the way of a road widening project, the Texas city of League City will spend almost \$200,000 to move it. The City Council voted to move the Ghirardi Oak about a quarter of a mile for \$197,500. That will allow the city to widen Louisiana Avenue on the east side.

The city of New York Tourism Agency has an annual goal of 55 million visitors by 2015, and it's planning to reach that by appealing to travelers Ages 18 to 29. The NYC 30 Initiative will promote discount offers. The city also plans to create a network of affordable, legal hotels. (It sounds like they do not want us old timer CHVA members to visit there.)

The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland has nearly finished its \$7 million renovation project, just in time for the year's induction ceremony on April 14th.

Helpful Hints. - The Michigan State Police Office of Highway Safety Planning has announced that hundreds of bars and restaurants in the state will be serving drinks on coasters with a "quick response" code that people can scan with their smartphones to get a list of cab companies. Law enforcement agencies in 26 counties are stepping up drunken driving enforcement.

According to the U.S., Census Bureau, there are 121,446 gas stations in the U.S. According to Canadian Business/canadianbusiness.com, there are 12,684 gas stations in Canada. (Information courtesy of Historic Vehicle Association magazine)

Oregon and New Jersey are the only two states that do not allow self-service gas stations in their states.

Larry Becker March 27, 2012

