

WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Arizona Transit Association

February 23, 2007

AzTA Broadens the Scope of Blue Ribbon Transportation Committee to Include All Modes of Transportation

HB 2682, relating to the blue ribbon transportation committee, establishes a new committee to review statewide transportation issues in preparation for a statewide transportation plan that will likely be on the ballot in 2008.

As originally introduced, the bill arguably limited the committee's focus to essentially highway related transportation modes.

AzTA provided testimony in the House Committee on Transportation to clarify that public transportation was an eligible transportation mode for consideration by the committee.

Despite initial objections from the bill's sponsor, an amendment was adopted in the House Committee of the Whole (offered by Rep. Tom Prezelski in conjunction with Rep. Steve Farley), that allows all modes of transportation to be eligible for the discussion and action by the proposed blue ribbon transportation committee.

While the amendment does not guarantee that the blue ribbon transportation committee will make recommendations

favorable for public transportation, it does establish the assurance that public transportation will be an eligible part of the discussion on any statewide transportation planning process that this committee may undertake.

AzTA Legislative Day at the Capitol a Major Success

The Arizona Transit Association held its first annual Legislative Day at the Capitol on February 21st. AzTA members conducted several high profile meetings with key legislators, including, but not limited to, Senate President Tim Bee and Senate Majority Leader Thayer Verschoor.

The event offered AzTA members an opportunity to increase the awareness of Arizona's only statewide public transportation organization as well as to provide input on several public transportation related bills under consideration during the 2007 legislative session.

The legislative day was capped with a luncheon for AzTA members, legislators and legislative staff to further informally discuss public transportation policy. Approximately 60 members of the Arizona Legislature attended the luncheon.

Week in Review

SB1587, relating to transportation innovative partnerships program, passed out of the Senate Committee on Appropriations with an 8-3 vote.

A Preview for the Week Ahead

There are no public transportation related bills scheduled for the week beginning on February 26th.

Comments

Please contact Stuart Goodman at 602-277-0911 or sgoodman@goodmanschwartz.com.

LEGISLATIVE TRACKING REPORT

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BILL	TITLE	SPONSORS	SUMMARY	HOUSE COMMITTEES	SENATE COMMITTEES	ACTION
HB 2131	development fees; public transportation	Farley (6)	As introduced, allows municipalities and counties to assess development fees to offset the costs of public transportation.	Counties and Municipalities, Ways and Means, Rules		committee assignment, 1/16
HB 2228	vehicle license tax; hybrid vehicles S/E: Highway expansion fund; transit capital projects	McClure (2)	STRIKE EVERYTHING AMENDMENT: Sets aside the sum of \$10,000,000 in the <i>Highway Expansion and Extension Loan Program (HELP)</i> fund for eligible transit capital projects in municipalities with a population of fifty thousand persons or less.	Transportation, Appropriations, Rules		passed, House Transportation, 2/15
HB 2570	railroad right-of-way acquisition	Biggs	As introduced, on the approval of the State Transportation Board, the Arizona Department of Transportation shall use the monies from a designated fund to acquire a railroad right-of-way to accommodate future freight or passenger rail service. \$650,000 is available for the purchase of such right-of-way.	Transportation, Appropriations, Rules		passed, House Appropriations, 2/14



BILL	TITLE	SPONSORS	SUMMARY	HOUSE COMMITTEES	SENATE COMMITTEES	ACTION
HB 2682	blue ribbon transportation committee	Biggs	As introduced, establishes a legislative committee to review reports on transportation and make recommendations on which legislative issues relating to transportation should be addressed in the next legislative session. The issues shall include road planning, highway financing alternatives and road safety. AMENDMENT: Removes the requirements that the issues include road planning, highway financing alternatives and road safety.	Transportation, Rules		passed, House COW, 2/22
SB 1161	HOV lanes; motorcycles; buses	Tibshraeny	As introduced, clarifies existing state law to allow unoccupied public transportation buses and motorcycles to use the HOV at all times. Consistent with federal law that governs the construction and use of federally funded HOV lanes.	Transportation, Rules	Transportation, Rules	House committee assignment, 2/14
SB 1585	HOV lane conversion; toll lane	Gould (2)	As introduced, requires the Department of Transportation, by November 15, 2012, to issue a request for proposals for the conversion of HOV lanes on Interstate 17 between Loop 101 and Interstate 10 into a high occupancy toll lane. Allows ADOT to issue an RFP for the conversion of the HOV lanes on any other highway in this state into a high occupancy toll lane by November 15, 2012.		Transportation, Rules	passed, Senate Transportation, 2/13
SB 1591	performance audits; light rail	Gould (1)	As introduced, states that if the light rail system is not completed on or before January 1, 2009, a separate performance audit shall be conducted twelve months after the minimum operating system is open. Requires the Auditor General to contract with a nationally recognized independent auditor with expertise in evaluating multimodal transportation systems and in regional transportation planning to conduct the performance audit. Requires the costs of the audit to be paid from revenues of the county transportation excise tax.		Transportation, Rules	passed, Senate Transportation, 2/6

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SB 1610	highway expansion; extension loan program	Tibshraeny	As introduced, makes transit capital projects eligible for the Highway Expansion and Extension Program. Also makes transit capital purposes under the Federal SIB Act eligible for the Program. Transit capital purposes is defined to mean eligible land, buildings or rolling stock or a combination of eligible land, buildings and rolling stock that is part of the federal Transit Administration's Rural Public Transportation Program for municipalities with populations of less than 50,000 persons.		Transportation, Rules	committee assignment, 2/1
SB 1635	FAST lanes	Gorman (1)	As introduced, requires the Department of Transportation, notwithstanding any other law, to issue a request for proposal by July 1, 2008, to private entities for the purpose of entering into a contract with a private entity for the conversion of an existing HOV lane to a freeway acceleration and sensible transportation (FAST) lane, for the purpose of constructing new FAST lanes and for the purpose of entering into contracts for the operation of the FAST lanes by private entities. Allows the Department to convert, construct or operate or both convert and operate or construct and operate the FAST lane if no proposal by a private entity is acceptable. States a FAST lane is a lane for use by drivers of vehicles carrying fewer than two persons in a HOV lane who pay a specified fee. A person may operate a motorcycle in a FAST lane without paying a specified fee unless prohibited by official traffic control devices. The Department is prohibited from entering into a contract for the conversion of a HOV lane to a FAST lane if the conversion will result in the loss or refund of federal funds for construction, reconstruction, repairs, improvement, planning, supervision and maintenance of the state highway system and other		Transportation, Rules	passed, Senate Transportation, 2/13

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			<p>public highways. Requires the Department to structure a variable fee to ensure unrestricted access to the lanes at all times by eligible vehicles, including buses, vehicles carrying more than one person, environmental protection agency certified low-emitting vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating over ten thousand pounds and alternative fuel vehicles that have been issued alternative fuel vehicle special plates or alternative fuel vehicle stickers.</p>			