

# AzTA **ADVOCACY**

## Weekly Legislative Report

January 18, 2018

The 53rd Arizona Legislature, 2nd Regular Session, is in full swing. As of today, a total of 697 bills have been introduced, with hundreds more to be brought forward in the coming weeks. This week featured the first full slate of committee hearings, though the agendas for those committees will be more extensive as the February 16 deadline for bills to be heard in their “house of origin” approaches. Other key deadlines are January 29 (last day for Senate introduction of bills) and February 5 (last day for House introduction of bills).

The Governor’s State Budget proposal was released to the public on Friday, January 12 and, as expected, was focused primarily on education. The Governor is proposing a \$284 million investment in K-12 education above the inflation and enrollment growth formula increases. The Governor indicates this money could be discretionary, used by school districts as they see fit. If so, these funds could be used for capital expenditures now often being funded by districts using operational dollars – thus freeing the operational funds to be used for increasing teacher salaries.

In the transit/transportation area, the Governor’s Executive Summary of his FY 2019 Budget states the following:

*The Executive Budget provides an additional \$25.6 million for preventive road surface maintenance, which includes liquid asphalt overlays that repair cracks and improve road smoothness. At \$40.6 million, the Executive Budget will spend the most money on annual surface treatment to preserve Arizona’s highways than at any other time in state history. The funding will result in surface treatments for more than 3,000 additional lane-miles.*

*The Executive recognizes that the State Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax Revenue (i.e., the “gas tax”) used to fund Arizona’s transportation infrastructure is inadequate to meet the rising cost demands of new construction and fails to capture the full road impact of alternative fuel vehicles.*

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*As more Arizonans transition to electric, hybrid, and other alternative fuel vehicles, the need for a stable and permanent revenue source to fund roads and bridges becomes even more critical. The Executive will direct ADOT to engage stakeholders and develop a more equitable funding solution that can support continued development and preservation of Arizona's highways.*

Bills that have been introduced of direct interest to AzTA:

As in last week's report, two bills of direct interest so far are SB 1147 and HB 2165 (title of both, "county excise tax for transportation"), introduced by Sen. Bob Worsley (R-Mesa) and Rep. Noel Campbell (R-Prescott), respectively, who are the chairs of the Senate and House Transportation Committees. Each bill states that the board of supervisors of any county would be permitted to submit to the voters a transportation plan funded by an excise tax. The board would be required to present the issue on the ballot as a single question for approval of both the transportation plan and the tax. HB 2165 has been assigned to both the House Ways and Means, and Transportation and Infrastructure Committees. We expect the House Transportation Committee will consider the bill at its January 31 meeting. SB 1147 has been assigned to the Senate Transportation and Technology Committee, though not yet scheduled for a hearing.

HB 2166 (vehicle fees; alternative fuel VLT), also sponsored by Rep. Campbell, has been assigned to the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and would repeal the separate VLT classification for alternative fuel vehicles. It's unclear at this point what effect, if any, this would potentially have on public transit fleet vehicles, such as Valley Metro buses and others. We will continue to monitor and analyze this bill in the coming weeks. We expect the bill to be heard in committee soon.

Sen. Steve Farley (D-Tucson) has also introduced two bills concerning Local Transportation Assistance Fund (LTAF) restoration (SB 1024) and restored Highway User Revenue Fund (HURF) funding (SB 1025). These are similar to bills he has introduced in recent years without success. SB 1024 would establish the LTAF fund, and require the Legislature to appropriate an amount necessary to provide that the total monies available in LTAF for each fiscal year equal \$20.5 million. SB 1025 states that revenues in HURF are required to be spent only for the construction or maintenance of transportation infrastructure. Both bills have been assigned to the Senate Appropriations Committee, though neither has been scheduled for a hearing.

These issues are being tracked in our on-line legislative tracking service, which you can access [here](#) for automatically-updated AzTA bill information, with our comments in red.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me.

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*AzTA is a non-profit statewide organization dedicated to improving public transportation in all Arizona communities.*



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