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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

	ORIGINAL DATE 1/25/2007		
SPONSOR Carraro	LAST UPDATED 3/14/2007	HB	
	Prevention of Wrong-Way		
SHORT TITLE Highway Traffic Study		SB	121/aSFC/aSF1
		ANALYST	Moser

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY07	FY08		
3,000.0		Non-Recurring	State Road Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

NM Department of Transportation (NMDOT)

NM Department of Public Safety (DPS)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of SFI Amendment

Senate Floor Amendment to Senate Bill 121 as amended expands the scope of the pilot project to look at alternatives to include the use of tire spikes to prevent wrong-way traffic on highway off ramps.

Synopsis of SFC Amendment

Senate Finance Committee Amendment to Senate Bill 121 changes the appropriation from the General Fund to the State Road Fund.

Synopsis of Original Bill

Senate Bill 121 proposes a pilot project to assess the feasibility of using spikes at ramps to prevent wrong-way access. A total appropriation of \$3,000,000 is proposed from the General Fund to the Department of Transportation for fiscal years 2007 and 2008.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

Fiscal implications would not apply to the cost of installation since funding is appropriated from the General Fund. However, there may be additional fiscal implications to the NMDOT with respect to system monitoring and system maintenance. This will vary contingent upon the number of locations selected in the pilot study.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

A pilot study usually, by definition implies a limited and controlled study. Results of a limited and controlled study would be isolated in nature and could very well not provide a solid basis to form an opinion as to the success of the program and whether to deploy such systems on a wider scale. The NMDOT indicates the value of such a pilot project would increase if there were sufficient sites selected for the pilot study. This could have substantial impacts on the cost to develop, deploy and maintain the project.

NMDOT points out that while many other states are investigating ways to deter wrong way entry on off-ramps, no states are utilizing spikes at ramps because of the significant safety issues involved. One-way tire puncture apparatus has been investigated in other states for feasibility of deterring wrong way entries onto high-speed facilities, however the effectiveness of the apparatus is questionable since tests of the systems have shown they fail to deflate tires fast enough to prevent entry onto the high speed facility. In addition, new puncture resistant tires may not deflate at all, or worse, they may be slightly damaged and then blow-out later when the vehicle is traveling at a high rate of speed, possibly contributing to fatalities unrelated to wrong-way entry. In addition maintenance of the apparatus is difficult and the systems that are currently available are not designed for high speeds. If spikes break in heavy traffic, remaining stubs can damage tires of right way vehicles, also possibly causing blow-outs when the vehicle is traveling at a high rate of speed at some later time.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

The NMDOT affirmatively states that this pilot study will have an impact on maintenance operations and expressed concern regarding potential damage to equipment and vehicles due to the current manner in which the department maintains on and off ramps. These concerns could easily be addressed through training and the proper selection of equipment.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

This bill may have implications regarding the resources necessary (personnel and equipment) to NMDOT and other affected agencies (State and local police) to establish, administer and evaluate the project.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

The NMDOT raises concerns regarding increased liability for the Department relative to claims to damaged vehicles. The department argues that the system could very well produce roadside hazards by having immobile vehicles on the ramps, backing up queues into the traveling lanes of the highway.