

Landmark Road Fix Tops List of New Laws

Passage of SB 1 in April Kicked Off an Active Year for Transportation Legislation

The 2016-17 California legislative session saw the passage of the most far-reaching and significant transportation funding bill in decades, the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017, Senate Bill 1. The new law, signed by Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr. in April, raised fuel taxes on Nov. 1 and will impose road improvement fees for most vehicles beginning Jan. 1, 2018 to fix the state's immense backlog of needed repairs to its transportation system.

A brief description of SB 1 and associated bills, and other transportation-related legislation that became law follows:

Senate Bill 1 (*Beall*) — Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017

This bill invests \$5.4 billion per year to fix roads, freeways, and bridges in communities across California. These funds will be split equally between state and local investments. The bill puts additional funds toward transit systems, active transportation to encourage pedestrian and bicycle travel, and freight mobility, and includes reforms and accountability measures.

Assembly Bill 115 (*Committee on Budget*) — SB 1 budget trailer bill

This is a budget trailer bill and provides technical clarifications for SB 1, various contracting and procedural flexibilities for local governments to implement SB 1, and an extension of Caltrans' Contract Manager/General Contractor contracting authority because of the expanded work required by SB 1.

SB 103 (*Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review*) — SB 1 budget trailer bill

This bill is a follow-up to SB 1, providing more detail for Caltrans' advance mitigation program, freight corridor program, and small business and diversity efforts in



Caltrans photo by Scott Lorenzo

Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr., accompanied by Senate Pro Tem Kevin de León at right and other lawmakers, heralded the fulfillment of his longtime goal to find funding to fix California's crumbling roads.

contracting. This bill establishes additional provisions and requirements for Caltrans' Advance Mitigation Program to offset environmental impacts of projects, and creates an Advance Mitigation Account. This bill also revises the requirements applicable to the Trade Corridor Improvement Fund to upgrade major freight routes in California, and makes the requirements applicable to the Trade Corridor Enhancement Account. Further, this bill establishes a small business participation goal in statute and requires outreach to underrepresented groups for contracting and employment.

AB 28 (*Frazier*) — NEPA assignment

This bill extends Caltrans' authority to conduct federal environmental reviews for transportation projects on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration until Jan. 1, 2020.

AB 515 (Frazier) — State Highway System Maintenance Plan

This bill supports Caltrans' shift to an integrated asset management plan by merging the 10 Year State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) Plan and the Five Year Maintenance Plan into one overarching State Highway System Maintenance Plan. The bill requires a draft of the plan to be submitted to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) by February 15 of each odd-numbered year, with the final plan submitted to the Governor and the Legislature by June 1.

AB 669 (Berman) — Truck platooning

This bill extends Caltrans' authorization to continue testing advanced cruise control driving technology for commercial trucks through Jan. 1, 2020. The technology that allows freight-carrying trucks to operate at distances less than 100 feet on state highways is intended to improve safety, lower vehicle emissions and save fuel.

SB 605 (Galgiani) — Small business definition

This bill, taking effect Jan. 1, 2019, increases from \$10 million to \$15 million the amount of annual gross receipts that a business may receive and be defined as a small business. The cap is raised to \$36 million specifically for public works projects. The bill also raises the amount for a microbusiness from \$2.5 million to \$5 million.

AB 1218 (Oberholte) — CEQA bicycle exemption

This bill extends California Environmental Quality Act exemptions for bicycle transportation plans and bike lane projects until Jan. 1, 2021. These exemptions are set to sunset on Jan. 1, 2018.

SB 672 (Fuller) — Traffic-actuated signals: motorcycles and bicycles

This bill makes permanent the statutory requirement for new and replacement traffic signals and equipment to detect bicycles and motorcycles. This requirement was set to expire on Jan. 1, 2018.

AB 1282 (Mullin) — Transportation Permitting Task Force

This bill requires the Secretary of the California Transportation Agency to establish a Transportation Permitting Task Force, consisting of representatives from Caltrans, the CTC, Department of Fish and Wildlife, the State Water Resources Control Board, regional water quality control boards, and the California Coastal Commission to streamline environmental permitting so that transportation projects can be delivered more quickly and efficiently. The bill would require the Secretary of Transportation, by Dec. 1, 2019, to prepare and submit to the Legislature a report of the task force's findings. **MM**

Source: Caltrans Legislative Affairs Office

California lawmakers, shown here during the 2016-2017 legislative session, passed a host of bills that will impact the state's transportation system.



Photo courtesy of Jeff Walters