

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 1145 (Jeff Gonzalez and Wallis)

As Amended June 17, 2026

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Requires the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in reviewing a proposed ordinance or resolution submitted by a local authority to regulate traffic on a state highway, to consider the cost compared to an alternative solution.

Senate Amendments

Delete the Assembly version of the bill and instead require the above.

COMMENTS

Background. According to The Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), California continues to experience a road safety crisis. Projections from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimate more than 4,400 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes throughout California in 2022, or about 12 people every day. Data from NHTSA for 2023 and 2024 estimates a year over year 5% increase in traffic fatalities. Across the state, traffic fatalities increased approximately 7.6% from 3,980 in 2020 to 4,285 in 2021. The increase of traffic fatalities in recent years led to the creation of the Vision Zero Network—a collaborative campaign with the goal of eliminating all traffic fatalities and severe injuries while increasing safe, healthy, and equitable mobility for all. Today, more than 40 communities (including at least 13 in California) across the country have joined the Vision Zero Network.

In 2022, Caltrans issued a Director's Policy on Road Safety (DP-36) which reaffirmed their vision of reaching zero fatalities and serious injuries on state highways by 2050. It also committed to a "Safe System" approach, which focuses on five elements: safe road users, safe roads, safe speeds, safe vehicles, and post-crash care. As part of DP-36, Caltrans committed to prioritizing safety in highway planning, operation, construction, and maintenance, to focus on eliminating the most serious crashes rather than all crashes and eliminating disparities in road safety outcomes. Caltrans is planning additional measures this year to further the Safe System approach.

Truck safety laws. The California Highway Patrol (CHP) enforces California's truck operating laws and regulations. CHP operates Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Facilities (CVEF) across the state to inspect the safety and weight of trucks and commercial vehicles. There are currently 54 CVEFs in the state plus 76 mini-sites.

Focus on State Route 74. State Route 74 (SR 74) is a 93-mile east–west highway extending from Interstate 5 in the City of San Juan Capistrano in Orange County to the southern city limits of Palm Desert in Riverside County. East of the City of Hemet, SR 74 transitions into an undivided two-lane highway passing through forested and winding terrains before reaching Palm Desert.

At least twelve hairpin curves exist between Hemet and Palm Desert. Despite posted signage and advisory speeds, several curves have been identified as posing operational and safety issues to large vehicles. Hairpin curve signage is used when the roadway changes direction by at least 135 degrees. SR 74 is restricted to California legal trucks no more than 65 feet in length with a

posted kingpin-to-rear-axle (KPRA) advisory distance of 30 feet or less. This advisory warns commercial vehicle drivers that the route may not be well-suited for long wheelbases or trailer vehicles.

Residents of Riverside County have been concerned about the volume of trucks travelling along this route. As noted by the author below, tragically, in October 2024, Tristan Bourgeois was killed driving to work on SR 74. A large dump truck pulling a trailer, both full of sand, lost control coming down the switchbacks above Palm Springs, tipped over, and collided with his pickup truck.

In response, Tristan's family advocated to make SR 74 safer, and the author introduced this bill last year requiring Caltrans to collect specified data from the past 10 years, including the number of fatal and nonfatal accidents, the number of incidents involving truck trailers, and the number and types of citations issued for certain violations. This bill also required Caltrans to develop recommendations to improve safety.

Local enforcement of truck safety. Existing law allows local agencies to propose truck restrictions on highways under their jurisdiction by ordinance or resolution. Those applicable to state highway must be submitted to Caltrans for approval. Caltrans' Truck Restriction Process requires local agencies to prepare an ordinance, initial study, and a report to Caltrans, all subject to public review and comment and ultimate approval by the Director of Caltrans.

Last summer, Riverside County prepared an initial study of possible truck restrictions on SR 74, including seven hairpin curves. The draft, completed in March 2026, is currently being reviewed by Caltrans and CHP. The study notes that many of the existing state route segments with specific restrictions, "were enacted due to recurring safety and operational issues on mountainous roads with steep grades or limited shoulder areas. The main concern is often off tracking even at low speeds, where long wheelbases and trailer combinations require trucks to encroach on the centerline or shoulders to complete tight turns." Specifically, the study included four recent examples of accidents or collisions since 2022 involving heavy vehicles and recommends the restriction of vehicles with more than three axles on a 21-mile segment, including a reduction of the allowable KPRA length to 38 feet.

This bill seeks to make Caltrans more deliberative and transparent. Since Riverside County moved forward with its initial study, the author recently amended AB 1145 to focus on a statewide approach that requires Caltrans to be more deliberative and transparent with these local agency requests.

Specifically, this bill requires Caltrans to consider the costs of the proposed ordinance or resolution compared to any possible alternative solution to the issue that the proposed ordinance or resolution is addressing. As noted by in the draft Riverside study, the alternative identified is widening the highway at certain points to accommodate the bigger trucks. The cost of widening a highway, especially with the conditions and terrain of SR 74's location, would be extremely difficult and costly. This bill requires Caltrans to weigh these factors in its decision making. If Caltrans rejects the proposed ordinance or resolution, it must provide written justification for the rejection to the submitting agency.

According to the Author

"Highway safety is critical to the wellbeing of communities throughout California. Highway 74 and many rural roads across the state serve as vital lifelines for residents traveling to work,

school, medical appointments, and other essential destinations. Yet many of these routes continue to face serious safety challenges, including deteriorating road conditions, increasing traffic demands, and accidents involving overweight or improperly routed commercial trucks. The tragic loss of Anza resident Tristin Bourgeois on October 31, 2024, serves as a painful reminder of the consequences of these hazards. His death left behind a grieving family and community and underscores the urgent need for stronger enforcement, improved road maintenance, and greater accountability in transportation planning. AB 1145 would help address these concerns by increasing transparency, accountability, and public engagement in transportation decisions affecting rural and mountain communities throughout California. The bill would require CalTrans, in reviewing alternatives submitted by local agencies, to evaluate associated costs and provide written explanations when recommendations are rejected. While it does not dictate the outcome of any transportation study, AB 1145 ensures that local voices are heard and that communities receive meaningful responses regarding decisions that impact public safety. The loss of Tristin Bourgeois reminds us that transportation decisions have real human consequences. AB 1145 is an important step toward ensuring safer roads and a more transparent process for the communities that depend on them."

Arguments in Support

Riverside County states that "...AB 1145 would facilitate the establishment of resilient, ready, and connected communities. Our primary objective includes making Highway 74, a vital transportation corridor for businesses, commuters, and tourists, safer given that frequent accidents and hazardous road conditions have negatively impacted travel efficiency and economic activity in the region. AB 1145 is an important piece of legislation that will address road safety concerns that have plagued this region for years."

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, pursuant to Senate Rule 28.8, negligible state costs.

VOTES**ASM TRANSPORTATION: 16-0-0**

YES: Wilson, Davies, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Carrillo, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Jackson, Lackey, Lowenthal, Macedo, Papan, Ransom, Rogers, Ward

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 14-0-1

YES: Wicks, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Elhawary, Fong, Mark González, Hart, Pacheco, Pellerin, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

ABS, ABST OR NV: Sanchez

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 78-0-1

YES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

ABS, ABST OR NV: Lee

SENATE FLOOR: 39-0-1

YES: Allen, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

ABS, ABST OR NV: Alvarado-Gil

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