

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING  
AB 2015 (Wicks)  
As Amended April 14, 2026  
Majority vote

## SUMMARY

Requires the Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in consultation with the California Transportation Agency (CalSTA) and local authorities, to conduct a comprehensive study and make recommendations on the impact of third-party navigation applications on the state highway system and local street and road networks by January 1, 2028.

### Major Provisions

- 1) Requires the study to analyze the impact of third-party navigation applications on congestion displacement, local infrastructure impact, safety metrics and emergency response, as specified.
- 2) On or before January 1, 2028, requires Caltrans to submit a report to the relevant fiscal and policy committees of the Legislature the study required and a report, based on the findings of the study, that includes policy recommendations for regulatory or legislative action to improve the alignment between third party navigation applications and state and local traffic management goals.
- 3) The recommendations may include the following:
  - a) Data-sharing requirements between third-part navigation applications and local jurisdictions.
  - b) Frameworks for third-party navigation applications to respect local traffic ordinances, such as weight limits or local access only designations.
  - c) Technological standards to prioritize safety and emissions reductions over marginal time savings.

## COMMENTS

Global Position System (GPS) became available for civilian use with limited accuracy in 1983.

The first handheld commercial GPS unit, the Magellan Nav 1000, was released in 1989. By 1991 Mazda became the first car company to factory install an in-car navigation system. By the mid-1990s, navigation websites like Mapquest became available, providing static print out directions for drivers to navigate from one location to another. In February of 2005, Google Maps was launched as a new solution to help drivers navigate.

In 2008, the Israeli startup Waze revolutionized navigation by utilizing crowdsourced data. Unlike traditional GPS devices, Waze incorporated real-time, user-submitted travel data to optimize routing based on live traffic patterns. Google acquired Waze in 2013 for approximately \$1 billion. This community-driven data model became the industry standard, enabling navigation apps to dynamically divert traffic to avoid congestion.

According to the 2025 Annual Urban Mobility Scorecard, Americans lost an average of 63 hours sitting in traffic in 2024, the highest level ever measured. That's the equivalent of nearly eight full workdays lost to traffic and marks a 16% increase in national congestion costs over the last five years, now totaling \$269 billion annually.

According to *Mitigating Traffic Congestion: The Role of Intelligent Transportation Systems*, a 2020 report by the London School of Economics, providing drivers with sensible route advice through navigation apps is a successful traffic management tool with the potential to reduce traffic externalities such as congestion, air pollution, and crashes. The report finds that the use of navigation systems alone is associated with a significant decrease in unnecessary travel time and congestion costs, resulting in annual national savings of approximately 175 million hours in travel time and \$4.72 billion in travel costs. Furthermore, the study suggests that the congestion-mitigating effect of these systems is enhanced as commuters increasingly utilize online traffic services and navigation applications. These findings highlight that real-time information provided by navigation tools is a highly cost-effective intervention compared to traditional physical infrastructure investments, which can sometimes paradoxically exacerbate congestion.

According to *Impact of Navigation Apps on Congestion and Spread Dynamics on a Transportation Network*, a study conducted by UC Berkeley Institute of Transportation Studies, "Our findings reveal that traffic system performance improves when 30–60% of users follow dynamic routing. The Susceptible–infected–recovered (SIR) model supports these findings, highlighting the most efficient congestion propagation-to-dissipation ratio when 40% of users adopt dynamic routing, as indicated by the lowest basic reproductive number. This research provides valuable insights into the intricate relationship between navigation apps and traffic congestion, with implications for transportation planning and management."

### **According to the Author**

"AB 2015 empowers local governments that have lawfully enacted slow streets programs to require navigation applications — including Google Maps, Apple Maps, and Waze — to exclude designated slow streets from their routing algorithms. The legislation closes a critical gap in existing law: communities can legally constrain traffic on streets, yet remain powerless as navigation platforms undermine that decision by directing a continuous stream of drivers onto those same roads. The proliferation of real-time navigation applications has fundamentally changed how drivers move through cities. These apps continuously analyze traffic data and route drivers toward the fastest path — regardless of whether that path runs through a quiet residential block, past a school, or down a street that a community has worked for years to make safer. AB 2015 is a pro-community, pro-safety measure rooted in the principle that locally elected governments, not algorithms, should determine how the streets of California's neighborhoods are used.:

### **Arguments in Support**

Streets for All, the sponsor of the bill, argues "While navigation applications are widely used to improve travel efficiency, their routing decisions can have unintended consequences on local communities and the broader transportation system. Drivers are often directed onto neighborhood streets or alternative routes that may not be designed to accommodate increased traffic volumes, leading to safety concerns, infrastructure strain, and conflicts with local traffic management strategies.

AB 2015 addresses this issue by creating a structured process to better understand the systemwide effects of navigation technologies. By analyzing congestion displacement, safety impacts, and coordination with emergency services, the study will provide critical data to inform

future policy decisions and ensure that navigation tools operate in alignment with state and local transportation goals."

### **Arguments in Opposition**

None on file.

## **FISCAL COMMENTS**

According to Assembly Appropriations Committee:

This bill creates significant new analytical work of Caltrans and, to a much lesser extent, CalSTA and local authorities. Caltrans is not able to provide a cost estimate; however, it describes the costs to comply with the bill as "significant," because of what Caltrans describes as the bill's "comprehensive nature" and "limited timeline for delivery." Caltrans further asserts it does not have in-house staffing or resources needed to perform this work and would likely need to contract with a specialized vendor in transportation and public engagement. (State Highway Account.)

## **VOTES**

### **ASM TRANSPORTATION: 13-1-2**

**YES:** Wilson, Davies, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Carrillo, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Jackson, Papan, Ransom, Rogers, Sharp-Collins

**NO:** Macedo

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Ávila Farías, Lackey

### **ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 12-3-0**

**YES:** Wicks, Hoover, Aguiar-Curry, Calderon, Caloza, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache

**NO:** Dixon, Ta, Tangipa

## **UPDATED**

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