

Date of Hearing: August 5, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 1382 (Alvarado-Gil) – As Amended April 6, 2026

Policy Committee: Transportation

Vote: 15 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill requires the Department of Transportation (Caltrans), before April 1 of each year, to the extent feasible, to notify an affected local official of Caltrans' proposed schedule for opening a mountain pass. In addition, the bill requires Caltrans to develop a public outreach plan to inform the public about the closing and opening of a mountain pass and publish the plan, at a minimum, on its internet website.

FISCAL EFFECT:

This bill will create significant new administrative work of Caltrans to identify affected local officials, develop an outreach plan and publish the plan on its website. Caltrans estimates annual costs to do so at approximately \$575,000 (State Highway Account)—\$375,000 for three positions, as well as \$200,000 in what Caltrans characterizes as “operating expenses” to create the plan, as well as ongoing efforts to conduct public outreach, draft communications materials and communicate with media, emergency response personnel, and county agencies, respond to public inquiries, and participate in internal and external meetings in preparation for and during the winter season.

COMMENTS:

The state highway system includes several high mountain passes. Caltrans closes access to the roadways in winter and reopens them when conditions permit. The onset of winter-like conditions varies from year to year, as do the duration and severity of those conditions. So, too, Caltrans' opening and closing of high mountain passes. Typically, Caltrans closes such roadways in December and has the goal of reopening all of them by Memorial Day of the following year. However, in recent years, Caltrans has reopened mountain pass roads as late as early June.

Caltrans posts road closures and openings on its website and via a mobile app. In addition, Caltrans says it sends road opening and closure notices to local officials and traffic advisories to local news outlets and posts on social media with estimates of mountain pass openings.

Nonetheless, the author relays the frustration of “rural residents and local officials” who have “consistently expressed frustration with limited visibility into expected opening timelines, making it difficult to plan for travel, commerce, and seasonal activity.” The author describes this bill as establishing a “reasonable and transparent framework” that “helps rural residents,

businesses, and visitors better plan for seasonal access while maintaining necessary flexibility for safety considerations.”

The author’s view is echoed by several elected officials that represent constituents that rely on high mountain passes and the Rural Counties Representatives of California, the latter of which asserts the bill “allows for better planning, strengthens local economies, and promotes transparency, while continuing to allow Caltrans to prioritize safety.”

There is no opposition registered against this bill.

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