

Date of Hearing: August 20, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 671 (Cervantes) – As Introduced February 20, 2025

Policy Committee: Transportation

Vote: 16 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: Yes

SUMMARY:

This bill requires the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to install touch-free accessible pedestrian signals (APS) at signalized pedestrian crossings on capital projects on the state highway system, encroachment permit projects and highway maintenance-funded projects.

The bill also requires local agencies to report to Caltrans on the implementation of leading pedestrian interval (LPI) installations where those local agencies are operating state-owned signals.

FISCAL EFFECT:

Caltrans describes this bill as creating the following work for it:

- 1) Establishing the means to track the status of LPI at delegated state-owned and locally operated signals.
- 2) Reporting local agency progress in the Transportation Management System inventory database.
- 3) Maintaining an inventory of new touch-free APS.
- 4) Educating the public on use of the APS system.

While this work appears substantial, Caltrans nonetheless contends it creates minor costs that Caltrans could absorb without additional staff or funding resources. This committee, therefore, expect Caltrans will not request additional resources to implement this bill.

Costs to local agencies to report to Caltrans on the implementation of LPI installations are likely to be minimal.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** The author notes the challenges faced by individuals with visual impairments in crossing busy intersections and intends this bill to lead to the more-widespread installation of touch-free APS, which the author describes as enabling those with vision loss to “know when they can safely cross the street by translating the warning lights into audio information.”

2) **Background.** According to Caltrans, a touch-free APS is a device that allows a pedestrian the option to place a "call" to cross the street by either using the pedestrian push button or by waving their hand in front of the touch-free APS. On June 24, 2021, Caltrans issued Operations Policy Directive number 21-06 that calls for both of the following:

- a) Touch-free APS shall be installed at new signalized pedestrian crossings on the state highway system for capital projects, encroachment permit projects, and highway maintenance-funded projects.
- b) When a touch-free APS is installed at an existing signalized pedestrian crossing, or in response to an access request pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, on the state highway system, all APS at that location shall be upgraded to touch-free APS.

This bill is consistent with the existing Caltrans policy directive. The bill is supported by Disability Rights California, which asserts:

Since the bill only requires accessible pedestrian signals to be installed under the same policies already in effect, SB 671 would not require the allocation of additional funding, nor does it cause any financial hardship on behalf of local counties or cities.

There is no opposition registered against this bill.

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