



Automotive Service Association®

LEGISLATIVE NEWS



A bimonthly news update from ASA's legislative activities.

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Recent activities of ASA's Washington, D.C., office ...

Maine Safety Inspection Bill Fails in Committee

Maine House Bill (HB) 167, introduced by State Rep. Richard Cebra, R-68, which would have required all state-registered vehicles to undergo a biannual safety inspection instead of Maine's current annual inspection, recently failed to make it out of committee.

ASA opposed HB 167 and invoked grassroots efforts to kill the legislation. We support vehicle safety inspection programs and have hosted informational forums, webinars and legislative initiatives to educate the public and policymakers about the value of periodic motor vehicle inspections. If enacted, this bill would have weakened a program specifically designed to protect the motoring public.

Each year, we see efforts to eliminate or harm vehicle safety inspection programs. Unfortunately, many lawmakers frame the inspection as an unnecessary tax or inconvenience, without regard to the potential harm ineffective brakes or other poorly maintained vehicle equipment can cause the motoring public.

We only have 16 states with inspection programs. What this says is that the majority of states have no mechanism to encourage safety for the millions of vehicles traveling their highways.

NHTSA Begins V2V Rulemaking Process

The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) published a notice of proposed rulemaking on vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) communications. The forthcoming rule would establish a new Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS), mandating V2V communications for new light vehicles and standardizing the message and format of the transmissions.

According to NHTSA, V2V messages will make use of the on-board, dedicated short-range radio communication (DSRC) devices to "transmit Basic Safety Messages (BSM) about a vehicle's speed, heading, brake status and other vehicle information to surrounding vehicles and receive the same information from them."

The purpose of the rule is to reduce the number of crashes by allowing a vehicle to identify potential hazards and notify the driver. NHTSA is currently requesting public comment through April 12, 2017.

State Legislatures Dive Into New-Tech Policy

With the state legislative season in full swing in many states, new automotive technologies, including vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) and vehicle-to-infrastructure (V2I) communications, driver assistance and automated vehicles (AV), are the focus for policymakers.

Since the beginning of the 2017 legislative session, there have been several bills introduced addressing self-driving

vehicles and vehicles with varying levels of automation. One such bill is New Jersey's Senate Bill (SB) 2895, introduced by State Sen. Nia Gill, D-34. SB 2895 clarifies that owners of self-driving motor vehicles must ensure that their vehicles comply with all existing insurance requirements. In this case, "self-driving" is defined as a vehicle "capable of operating without active control or monitoring by a human operator."

This movement is not unique to the states. In September 2016, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) issued federal policy guidelines for automobiles. The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration's (NHTSA) and DOT have both published items to regulate V2V communications.

AV technology also has captured the attention of congressional lawmakers. At the end of 2016, the U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce conducted a series of hearings on technological issues, including self-driving vehicles and connected devices.

With new technologies expanding at an exponential rate, policymakers are left playing catch-up in terms of regulation. ASA anticipates many more technology-specific bills over the course of the next few years as the legislative process attempts to keep pace with the rate of technology development.

Arkansas Crash-Parts Bill Dies

The Arkansas House Insurance and Commerce Committee voted down Arkansas Senate Bill (SB) 291, introduced by state Sen. Greg Standridge, R-16, by a voice vote. SB 291 would have repealed Arkansas' requirement for the use of original equipment crash parts in the repair of a vehicle that is still under the manufacturer's warranty, unless the vehicle owner has given written consent otherwise. In essence, the Committee upheld written consent as an important tool for consumers. ASA opposed SB 291.

The bill faced considerable opposition from Arkansas collision repair shops. On behalf of its Arkansas members, the Automotive Service Association (ASA) sent a letter to the chairman of the Arkansas House Committee on Insurance and Commerce in opposition to SB 291. ASA thanks its Arkansas members who contacted their representatives in opposition to SB 291.

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