

**MINUTES OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Eighty-second Session
March 20, 2023**

The Senate Committee on Growth and Infrastructure was called to order by Chair Dallas Harris at 3:35 p.m. on Monday, March 20, 2023, in Room 2144 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4412E of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau. [Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Dallas Harris, Chair
Senator Pat Spearman, Vice Chair
Senator Julie Pazina
Senator Scott Hammond
Senator Ira Hansen

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Senator Pete Goicoechea, Senatorial District No. 19

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kristin Rossiter, Policy Analyst
Paula Peters, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Tessa Laxalt, Nevada Trucking Association
Tamrah Jackson, Major, Nevada Highway Patrol, Nevada Department of Public Safety
James Simpson, Captain, Nevada Highway Patrol, Nevada Department of Public Safety

CHAIR HARRIS:

We will open the hearing on Senate Bill (S.B.) 110.

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SENATE BILL 110: Revises provisions governing the operation of vehicles on certain highways in the State of Nevada. (BDR 43-593)

SENATOR PETE GOICOECHEA (Senatorial District No. 19):
My support testimony is neutral because the Nevada Highway Patrol (NHP) is a State agency.

I am presenting S.B. 110. Last Session, we presented S.B. No. 232 of the 81st Session but experienced a fiscal note issue. We have resolved that issue this Session.

The law requires that you have your headlights on 30 minutes before sunrise and 30 minutes after sunset or if, at any point, you cannot discern a vehicle or a person at 1,000 feet.

Senate Bill 110 will require anyone driving on a rural two-lane or any two-lane highway in this State to have their headlights on at all times. You will be required to have them on the entire time, not just 30 minutes before sunset or 30 minutes after sunrise. The NHP testifying in neutral today will share stats that will confirm that the headlight usage required by S.B. 110 will save lives.

As you get older, it gets difficult to discern a vehicle at 1,000 feet, depending on whether it is flat light, dusty weather or windy weather. We have all driven on U.S. Route 95, State Route 318 and State Route 50. As we drive on these roads, it can be difficult to see ahead, especially in flat light or on long overcast days. If you are preparing to pass a truck, it is difficult to see a person a quarter mile down the road. If it is a gray vehicle on the gray highway with no headlights on, and no markers at all, it is very difficult to see the person or the truck.

Most vehicles today, including the newer vehicles, are equipped with automatic headlights. They come on automatically unless you opt to turn them on as you start your vehicle. If you do, you will be turning on your headlights or markers.

I am a huge fan of headlights versus side marker lights. One of the key pieces of that preference is if you have your headlights on, your taillights are on too. If you have your markers on, you will just have the small marker lights on.

Senate Bill 110 applies to any two-lane highways except city streets. Two-lane highways have one lane for traveling in each direction in the State. These vehicles would be required to have headlights on while driving, day or night.

TESSA LAXALT (Nevada Trucking Association):

I am testifying on behalf of the Nevada Trucking Association in support of S.B. 110. We thank the sponsor of the bill as this further secures the safety of the motoring public, including our truck drivers who move more than 95 percent of the freight in the Silver State.

TAMRAH JACKSON (Major, Nevada Highway Patrol, Nevada Department of Public Safety):

The Nevada Highway Patrol is here to present facts, statistics and information. There have been several studies over the years regarding daytime headlight use, as well as headlamp use, and most of those indicate a significant reduction in crashes. In 1977, Finland had a 27 percent reduction.

Closer to home, headlight or daytime running light usage reduced head-on collisions by 10 percent, reduced two-vehicle crashes by 5.7 percent, pedestrian crashes by 12 percent and motorcycle crashes by 23 percent.

JAMES SIMPSON (Captain, Nevada Highway Patrol, Nevada Department of Public Safety):

I work out of our Nevada Highway Patrol headquarters in Carson City. Over the past two years, from 2021 to 2022, there have been a significant number of head-on crashes on our rural roadways in Nevada. And that is not just for the NHP; that is for other agencies as well.

In 2021, there were 39 fatal head-on crashes. Twenty-six of those crashes happened during daytime hours. Had his law already been passed, it could have affected these crashes. In 2022, we had 19 fatal crashes with 10 of those during daytime hours.

The trucking industry research indicates that headlights or daytime running lamps increase visibility. Your reaction time is increased as you can see something further in the distance and be more prepared for a vehicle coming in your direction.

Having worked in rural areas, you can see vehicles with lights on at a greater distance. If anybody has driven on U.S. Route 93 or U.S. Route 95 when it is hot outside, vehicles look hazy like highway mirages. You can see vehicles sooner with headlights or daytime running lamps on. As I said earlier, 26 of the 39 crashes in 2021 occurred during daylight hours and could have been averted.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and other U.S. studies, there has been about a 7 percent reduction in fatal crashes.

SENATOR HANSEN:

Large sections of the State highway system already have signs that require headlights to be turned on while driving. Does the NHP have the authority to extend that to all State highways? If signage is allowed by State law, does that extend to the entire State? Are those county or State laws? Who has the authority to post the signs?

MAJOR JACKSON:

Those areas are determined by the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT). I think that the NDOT engineers determine which sections they have designed for signage.

SENATOR HANSEN:

The NDOT and not the NHP sets the policy. Therefore, NDOT must have authority to set the penalties. What are the penalties? For example, I am driving on the highway without my headlights on. Major Jackson pulls up behind me and issues me a ticket. What will the penalty amount be?

CAPTAIN SIMPSON:

Often our troopers will give drivers a visual warning and use their headlights to remind drivers that they forgot to turn on their headlights. We also give verbal warnings. In Nevada, the bail for each fine is set by the counties.

SENATOR HANSEN:

So, the fines will vary.

SENATOR PAZINA:

Senator Hansen mentioned the signage. How would we get word out so that we do not have out-of-state visitors driving without their headlamps on during

the day? Would we need to add any additional signage? Would we rely on signage, or is there another way of getting the word out?

SENATOR GOICOECHEA:

Cost is the problem we encountered last Session when we projected a \$20 million fiscal note to cover the cost of signage every time you entered a rural road. As Senator Hansen stated, we already have signage for daytime headlights in some sections of our highways. We could add signage at the State line. We have our seat belt enforcement, the "Click it or Ticket" campaign signage. We could add a sign saying that daytime headlights are required in Nevada. We would post these where you enter two-lane highways after crossing the border.

SENATOR PAZINA:

Will a warning be given to drivers when the program is implemented? Especially drivers near State lines need to be warned in case someone missed the signage. Or will drivers immediately receive a fine?

SENATOR GOICOECHEA:

Because this commonsense bill addresses safety, it would be all right if we waited three years before we started writing tickets. As Captain Simpson said, troopers can flash drivers with their headlights to remind them to turn their headlights on. I am open to adding an amendment addressing penalties if that would help to get this bill passed.

SENATOR PAZINA:

I understand the need for this wholeheartedly. I want to make sure we can get the word out.

SENATOR GOICOECHEA:

Requiring headlights is no different now than it is for making it illegal to hold and talk on a cell phone while driving. People used to drive without wearing seat belts, and now you could be issued a moving citation for not wearing your seat belt. It is a learning process. It might take up to ten years to get everyone in the habit of using their headlights, but it is worth it. You are safer when you can see the headlights coming toward you.

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

It is a good idea to require headlights. There are older cars that do not have automatic daytime running lights. Would drivers be required to get daylight running lights installed?

SENATOR GOICOECHEA:

I have numerous older vehicles myself. There will be no requirement to have automatic headlights. The driver would have to remember to turn them on. When you do not turn them on, that is when an NHP trooper will flash his headlights at you as a reminder. I often turn my headlights on when it is not required, if it is approaching evening and it is overcast or flat light. While driving, if a car approaches me without its headlights on, I will tap my headlights to remind the driver to turn them on.

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CHAIR HARRIS:

Having no further business to come before the Senate Committee on Growth and Infrastructure, we are adjourned at 3:52 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Paula Peters,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator Dallas Harris, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	Exhibit Letter	Introduced on Minute Report Page No.	Witness / Entity	Description
	A	1		Agenda
	B	1		Attendance Roster