



DATE: March 6, 2013

TO: House Committee on Transportation and Economic Development

FROM: Paul Mather
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SUBJECT: HB 2277

INTRODUCTION

House Bill 2277 requires the Oregon Department of Transportation to issue an annual permit to those who use studded tires in Oregon and set the fee for the permit by determining biennially the damage to Oregon's highways caused by studded tires.

BACKGROUND

Studded tires cause damage to roads and highways, and as a result, their use is limited in Oregon law to the winter season, between November 1 and April 1. Studded tires offer increased traction for motorists in icy conditions. Motorists may also use tire chains, studless snow tires or a vehicle with four-wheel drive in snow and ice conditions.

ODOT conducted a [study](#) in 2000 to determine the pavement wear and cost to repair studded tire damage. The study concluded that the state, cities and counties spend approximately \$11 million each year to repair studded tire damage, although the damage caused exceeds \$40 million each year.

DISCUSSION

House Bill 2277 requires ODOT to:

- Determine the amount of damage caused by studded tires biennially
- Determine the number of vehicles registered in Oregon that use studded tires
- Determine the fee by dividing the damage by the number of users
- Issue annual permits
- Use the revenue generated from permits to repair studded tire damage

While the bill may align with Oregon's long-time user-pay philosophy for Oregon's roads by requiring those who cause the damage to pay for it, it creates some challenges for ODOT to implement.

- The bill requires ODOT to determine each biennium the amount of damage to highways caused by studded tires. It would require ODOT to assess the condition of not only state highways, but also county roads and city streets that are not within ODOT's jurisdiction. ODOT would also be tasked with determining the number of studded tire users. The agency could make this determination through telephone and parking lot surveys. The costs of these new tasks may not prove cost effective in relation to program size.

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- The bill requires ODOT to determine the fee and issue a 12-month permit, but studded tires are only legal for a five-month period, unless extended by ODOT. This may cause motorists to believe they can use studded tires beyond the dates identified in law.
- The bill does not identify how money should be distributed between the state, counties and cities.

SUMMARY

Studded tires are used by motorists in inclement weather conditions. HB 2777 sets up a studded tire permit program administered by ODOT; revenues generated from the permit are to be used to repair studded tire damage.