

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: March 19-20, 2026

From: TANISHA TAYLOR, Executive Director

Reference Number: 4.8, Information

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Subject: Draft Vehicle Weight Safety Study Report to the Legislature (Assembly Bill 251)

Summary:

California Transportation Commission (Commission) staff will provide an informational presentation on the Commission's draft Vehicle Weight Safety Study Report to the Legislature (draft report), included as Attachment A. The presentation will include an overview of the draft report, including the findings from the research conducted by the University of California and the Vehicle Weight Safety Study Task Force (Task Force), considerations for the Legislature, and additional feedback opportunities.

Based on the research by the University of California, the findings of the Task Force, and feedback from Commissioners, members of the Interagency Equity Advisory Committee (EAC), and the public, the report describes clear trends in the growing weight of California's passenger vehicle weights and the increasing number of fatalities and serious injuries among vulnerable road users. However, the report does not identify a clear causal relationship between these two trends due to the difficulty in isolating any singular variable in a crash as the primary factor. The report also finds that growing passenger vehicle weight is unlikely to significantly impact the degradation of road infrastructure. It also finds that consumer purchase behavior would respond to very large one-time fees based on vehicle weight (a one-time fee of \$3,871 on average with the maximum fee of \$19,500 for the heaviest and most expensive passenger vehicle), but not to smaller, annual fees.

For these reasons, the report does not recommend implementation of a passenger vehicle weight fee at this time, but it does include considerations for the Legislature should it choose to implement a fee. It also includes considerations for establishing a voluntary motor vehicle nonoccupant safety rating for passenger vehicles, that could provide consumers with more information to incentivize the purchase of safer passenger vehicles and supplement technological advancements made by manufacturers intended to enhance occupant and nonoccupant safety.

Background:

As added by Assembly Bill 251 (Ward, Chapter 320, Statutes of 2023), Government Code Section 14527.3 requires the Commission to convene a task force to study the relationship between vehicle weight and injuries to vulnerable road users (such as pedestrians and cyclists) and degradation to roads, and to study the costs and benefits of imposing a passenger vehicle weight fee that considers vehicle weight. The Commission is required to submit a report to the Legislature summarizing its findings and any legislative recommendations.

The Task Force met five times between June and November 2025, pursuant to the requirements of the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act. The content of the draft report is derived from the Task Force findings, academic research conducted by the University of California to inform the Task Force process, and feedback from the Commission, members of the EAC, stakeholders and the public. Summaries of the research were presented to the Task Force at each meeting, along with questions to solicit feedback intended to respond to the legislative requirements. After the conclusion of the Task Force process, Commission staff presented a summary of the Task Force findings to both the Commission and the Transportation Planning and Program Guidance Subcommittee of the EAC in December 2025.

This draft report was also presented to the EAC on March 4, 2026 to kick off the public comment period. Feedback received from Commissioners, EAC members, and the public during the March 2026 presentations, draft report workshop, and public comment period will be incorporated in the final Vehicle Weight Safety Study Report to the Legislature (final report). Commission staff anticipate presenting the final report to the Commission for approval at the May 2026 Commission meeting.

Attachment:

- Attachment A: Draft Vehicle Weight Safety Study Report to the Legislature