

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 178

BY SENATOR BARROW

A RESOLUTION

To direct the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development to conduct a study and report on road hazards on state highways, their impact on Louisiana residents, and develop practical policy recommendations.

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) is charged with the maintenance and improvement of over 16,000 miles of state-owned roadways, including responsibility for addressing road hazards such as potholes, damaged signage, debris, and deteriorating infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, road hazards can be considered a threat to public safety, a contributor to vehicular damage, and a significant financial burden for Louisiana families and businesses; and

WHEREAS, damage from road hazards such as potholes, may leave drivers and low-income residents without recourse or protection; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Transportation and Development has legal staff dedicated to the assessment and litigation of damage claims sustained on state highways; and

WHEREAS, data on claims, settlement and litigation payouts, and repair response times to hazardous roads that cause damage to citizens should be readily transparent to the public or policymakers; and

WHEREAS, other states, including New York, California, and Florida, have adopted a range of legal, administrative, and fiscal approaches to road hazard claims and prevention, such as mandatory reporting systems, dedicated funding streams, lower liability thresholds, and innovative road user fee programs; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana would benefit from evaluating such national best practices to enhance its own policies, funding strategies, and public accountability mechanisms; and

WHEREAS, addressing road hazards efficiently and equitably is not only a matter of infrastructure maintenance but also a critical factor in advancing public safety, economic productivity, and citizens' quality of life.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby direct the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development to conduct a comprehensive review and a report of other states and national best practices in comparison to the department's current process to include all of the following:

(1) Access road hazard management practices, including maintenance protocols, reporting systems, and average response times for damage claims.

(2) Compile and report data on the number of citizen claims filed for road hazard-related damages, the number of claims approved or denied, the total and average payout amounts, and the reasons for denials.

(3) Assess the financial and quality-of-life burdens caused by road hazards on Louisiana residents, particularly lower-income and rural communities.

(4) Review relevant statutes and policies regarding liability, insurance coverage, and sovereign immunity related to road hazard damages.

(5) Examine models and programs from other states that offer improved claim processes, alternative funding mechanisms, or streamlined hazard reporting systems.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the DOTD shall develop policy recommendations for improving road hazard mitigation and compensation procedures, to be submitted in a report to the Senate Committee on Transportation, Highways and Public Works and to the David R. Poynter Legislative Research Library, as required by R.S. 24:771, no later than February 1, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE