

CARPOOL LANE USAGE MODIFICATIONS

2023 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Stephanie Gricius

Senate Sponsor: Michael S. Kennedy

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill amends provisions related to high occupancy vehicle lanes on a highway to consider a vehicle with a pregnant individual as containing two occupants for purposes of high occupancy vehicle lane purposes.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- ▶ amends provisions related to high occupancy vehicle lanes on a highway to count a pregnant individual as two occupants for purposes of high occupancy vehicle lane purposes; and
- ▶ enacts an affirmative defense provision that allows a pregnant individual to provide evidence of pregnancy as cause for citation dismissal.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

41-6a-702, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2020, Chapter 74

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:



28 Section 1. Section 41-6a-702 is amended to read:

29 **41-6a-702. Left lane restrictions -- Exceptions -- Other lane restrictions --**

30 **Penalties.**

31 (1) As used in this section and Section 41-6a-704, "general purpose lane" means a
32 highway lane open to vehicular traffic but does not include a designated:

33 (a) high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane; or

34 (b) auxiliary lane that begins as a freeway on-ramp and ends as part of the next freeway
35 off-ramp.

36 (2) On a freeway or section of a freeway which has three or more general purpose lanes
37 in the same direction, a person may not operate a vehicle in the left most general purpose lane
38 if the person's vehicle or combination of vehicles has a gross vehicle weight rating of 18,001 or
39 more pounds.

40 (3) Subsection (2) does not apply to a person operating a vehicle who is:

41 (a) preparing to turn left or taking a different highway split or an exit on the left;

42 (b) responding to emergency conditions;

43 (c) avoiding actual or potential traffic moving onto the highway from an acceleration or
44 merging lane; or

45 (d) following direction signs that direct use of a designated lane.

46 (4) (a) A highway authority may designate a specific lane or lanes of travel for any type
47 of vehicle on a highway or portion of a highway under its jurisdiction for the:

48 (i) safety of the public;

49 (ii) efficient maintenance of a highway; or

50 (iii) use of high occupancy vehicles.

51 (b) The lane designation under Subsection (4)(a) is effective when appropriate signs or
52 roadway markings giving notice are erected on the highway or portion of the highway.

53 (c) For purposes of determining the occupancy of a vehicle for use of a high occupancy
54 vehicle lane, when a pregnant individual is driving with no other individuals in the vehicle, the
55 vehicle is considered to have at least two occupants.

56 (5) (a) Subject to Subsection (5)(b), the lane designation under Subsection (4)(a)(iii)
57 shall allow a vehicle with a clean fuel vehicle decal issued in accordance with Section 72-6-121
58 to travel in lanes designated for the use of high occupancy vehicles regardless of the number of

59 occupants as permitted by federal law or federal regulation.

60 (b) (i) In accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act,
61 the Department of Transportation may make rules to allow a vehicle with a clean fuel vehicle
62 decal to travel in lanes designated for the use of high occupancy vehicles regardless of the
63 number of occupants as permitted by federal law or federal regulation.

64 (ii) Except as provided in Subsection (5)(b)(iii), the Department of Transportation may
65 not issue more than 6,000 clean fuel vehicle decals under Section 72-6-121.

66 (iii) The Department of Transportation may, through rules made under Subsection
67 (5)(b)(i), increase the number of clean fuel vehicle decals issued in accordance with Section
68 72-6-121 beyond the minimum described in Subsection (5)(b)(ii) if the increased issuance will
69 allow the Department of Transportation to continue to meet its goals for operational
70 management of the lane designated under Subsection (4)(a)(iii).

71 (6) A public transportation vehicle may operate in a lane designated under Subsection
72 (4)(a)(iii) regardless of the number of occupants as permitted by federal law and regulation.

73 (7) (a) [A] Subject to Subsection (7)(b), a person who operates a vehicle in violation of
74 Subsection (2) or in violation of the restrictions made under Subsection (4) is guilty of an
75 infraction.

76 (b) An individual who is pregnant at the time of citation for violation of high
77 occupancy vehicle lane minimum occupancy, may establish an affirmative defense to dismiss
78 the citation by providing medical documentation signed by the individual's physician in which
79 the physician attests that the individual was pregnant on the date of the citation.