



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

Senate Transportation Committee Passes Legislation to Help Combat Wrong-Way Driving

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. May 15, 2012

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Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick), Chairman of the Senate's Transportation Committee announced that the Committee approved legislation to help prevent wrong-way driving crashes on New York's roadways.

Under the legislation (S938, Senator Marcellino), the Department of Transportation would be required to create a program in consultation with the Department of Motor Vehicles to address wrong-way driving. The program would investigate the reasons for wrong-way driving crashes; examine what other states have done; set forth possible solutions; and implement measures to address wrong-way driving.

"Wrong-way driving is becoming more and more common, and that puts lives at risk. While stronger penalties are needed for wrong-way drivers, the state must also develop a plan to address this continuing problem which is jeopardizing safety on our roads. This legislation would ensure that happens," said Senator Fuschillo.

Over 30 wrong-way driving crashes and/or arrests occurred on Long Island alone since November 15, 2010 when off-duty NYPD Officer Andre Menzies was killed by an accused

wrong-way drunk driver on the Northern State Parkway. Wrong-way driving crashes have also occurred in New Rochelle and Westchester County.

This continues the committee's efforts to address wrong-way driving incidents and crashes. In January, the committee approved legislation (S3452), sponsored by Senator Fuschillo, which would create felony charges for motorists who drive the wrong-way, either knowingly or because they were intoxicated or impaired. The legislation has been passed by the full Senate.

Additionally, the Committee approved legislation which would:

- * Establish a statewide "next of kin registry" through the Department of Motor Vehicles in which drivers could voluntarily enter two emergency contacts to be notified by emergency personnel in the event of an accident. This would make it easier for the police officer responding to the accident scene to notify an accident victim's next of kin if the victim is injured, killed, or incapacitated (S5276, Senator Ritchie).

- * Require the Department of Transportation to conduct a study examining the risk of motor vehicles departing the travel lane and overturning or colliding with fixed objects, other vehicles or pedestrians, or leaving the roadway. The study would focus on portions of state roads with high numbers of fatal crashes and areas with steep slopes, embankments, cliffs, drop-offs, or deep bodies of water (S7399, Senator Diaz).