

California State Senate

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

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10TH SENATE DISTRICT



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Corbett Limo Safety Bill Heads to Governor's Desk

Tragic Deaths on San Mateo-Hayward Bridge Impetus for SB 109

SACRAMENTO – Legislation authored by Senate Majority Leader Ellen M. Corbett (D-East Bay) increasing the number of required exit points in the passenger compartments of limousines passed from the Legislature today with strong bipartisan support and now proceeds to Governor Jerry Brown for consideration.

SB 109 requires that limousines have at least two rear side doors and one or two rear push-out windows to be used in the case of an emergency. The doors must be situated on opposite sides of the vehicle. At least one or two rear push-out windows must also be placed on opposite sides of the vehicle, though provisions within the bill allow for a push out window to be installed on the roof of the limousine if vehicle structural limitations exist.

Under SB 109, limousine operators will also be required to instruct passengers on the safety features of the vehicle before the beginning of any trip. The bill applies to all new limousines after July 1, 2015 and contains a two-and-a-half year phase-in period for limousines modified or extended prior to that date.

This important bill follows the tragic deaths of a bride and four friends in a horrific limousine fire on the San Mateo-Hayward Bridge in early May, as well as a second incident in Walnut Creek where 10 elderly women narrowly escaped serious injury less than six weeks later. In recent months, several other limousine fires throughout the nation have also highlighted the urgent need to protect passengers in these vehicles.

“SB 109 ensures that limo passengers are able to safely and quickly escape the vehicle when time is of the essence,” Senator Corbett said. “SB 109 seeks to prevent any future tragedies similar to the one that occurred on the San Mateo-Hayward Bridge in May that killed five young women. Limousine safety is critical so that passengers can be assured that they will arrive at their destinations safely for their wedding, prom, birthday or other celebrations. I remain optimistic that Governor Brown will sign this critical bill into law so that limo passengers can be confident that they will be able to evacuate a limo in the case of a fire or any other emergency.”

SB 109 is supported by the California Professional Firefighters, California Public Utilities Commission and the Consumers for Auto Reliability and Safety.