



Senate

General Assembly

January Session, 2005

File No. 196

Senate Bill No. 1288

Senate, April 6, 2005

The Committee on Transportation reported through SEN. CIOTTO of the 9th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING REGISTRATION AND USE OF CERTAIN LOW SPEED NEIGHBORHOOD VEHICLES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsection (a) of section 14-1 of the general statutes is
2 amended by adding subdivision (99) as follows (*Effective October 1,*
3 *2005*):

4 (NEW) (99) "Neighborhood electric vehicle" means a four-wheel,
5 self-propelled, electrically-powered motor vehicle designed for
6 conveyance of passengers, that has an attainable speed of not less than
7 twenty miles per hour and not more than twenty-five miles per hour
8 on a paved, level surface and that conforms with standards adopted
9 for low speed vehicles by the National Highway Safety and Traffic
10 Administration, in accordance with 49 CFR 571.500, as amended from
11 time to time.

12 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2005*) (a) The Commissioner of

13 Motor Vehicles may, on application in accordance with the provisions
14 of section 14-12 of the general statutes and subject to the financial
15 responsibility provisions of section 14-112 of the general statutes, issue
16 a certificate of registration and marker plates to the owner or lessee of
17 a neighborhood electric vehicle. The applicant shall pay the fee
18 required under subsection (f) of section 14-49 of the general statutes.
19 Such owner or lessee shall carry such registration and proof of
20 financial responsibility in the vehicle and display marker plates as
21 required by section 14-18 of the general statutes. The commissioner
22 shall issue a certificate of title, pursuant to the provisions of chapter
23 247 of the general statutes, for each vehicle that has been issued a
24 manufacturer's or importer's certificate of origin and vehicle
25 identification number.

26 (b) No individual may operate a neighborhood electric vehicle
27 unless (1) the individual carries a valid motor vehicle operator's license
28 or learner's permit, (2) a certificate of registration and automobile
29 insurance identification card for the vehicle are carried in the motor
30 vehicle and marker plates are displayed in accordance with the
31 provisions of section 14-18 of the general statutes, and (3) such vehicle
32 is equipped in accordance with the requirements of sections 14-80 to
33 14-106c, inclusive, of the general statutes, except insofar as any
34 requirement of said sections is inapplicable to or inconsistent with the
35 design and equipment standards for low speed vehicles, as adopted by
36 the National Highway Safety Traffic Administration in accordance
37 with 49 CFR 571.500, as amended from time to time.

38 (c) A neighborhood electric vehicle may be operated on a highway
39 only if such highway has an established speed limit of no more than
40 thirty miles per hour, except that the traffic authority of any
41 municipality may limit or prohibit the operation of neighborhood
42 electric vehicles on any highway under the jurisdiction of such local
43 traffic authority.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>October 1, 2005</i>	14-1(a)
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2005</i>	New section

TRA *Joint Favorable*

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either House thereof for any purpose:

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 06 \$	FY 07 \$
Department of Motor Vehicles	TF - See Below	See Below	See Below

Note: TF=Transportation Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill treats neighborhood electric vehicles to the same requirements as motor vehicles operated on public roads. Requirements include but are not limited to: licensed operator, mandatory insurance, titling and registration and marker plates.

There is a revenue gain to the Transportation Fund from the various Department of Motor Vehicles fees such vehicles will be subject to. The magnitude cannot be determined at this time since it is unknown how many neighborhood electric vehicles will be operated on public roads.

The Department of Motor Vehicles will be able to accommodate any additional administrative functions resulting from passage of the bill within its anticipated budgetary resources.

OLR Bill Analysis

SB 1288

AN ACT CONCERNING REGISTRATION AND USE OF CERTAIN LOW SPEED NEIGHBORHOOD VEHICLES**SUMMARY:**

This bill authorizes the operation of "neighborhood electric vehicles" on highways that have speed limits of up to 30 miles per hour, but authorizes a municipality's local traffic authority to limit or prohibit their operation within its jurisdiction. It defines a neighborhood electric vehicle as a four-wheeled, self-propelled, electrically-powered motor vehicle designed for carrying passengers with an attainable speed of at least 20 but not more than 25 miles per hour on a paved level surface. Neighborhood electric vehicles must meet standards established for low speed vehicles by federal regulation as well as various state requirements for mandatory equipment.

In addition, the bill appears to require these vehicles to have registrations and certificates of title, subjects them to mandatory financial responsibility requirements, and requires the driver to have a valid driver's license or learner's permit.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2005

APPLICABLE FEDERAL STANDARDS

The bill requires neighborhood electric vehicles to meet the standards established for low speed vehicles by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. These regulations require low speed vehicles to have (1) headlamps, (2) front and rear turn signal lamps, (3) tail lamps, (4) stop lamps, (5) reflex reflectors (one red reflector on each side as far to the rear as practicable and one on the rear), (6) an exterior mirror on the driver's side and either an exterior mirror on the passenger's side or an internal mirror, (7) a parking brake, (8) a windshield conforming to federal glazing standards, (9) a vehicle identification number conforming to federal requirements, and (10) seat belt assemblies conforming to federal standards at each designated seating position. Also, the maximum speed the vehicle

may attain in one mile following specific test procedures and conditions cannot be more than 25 miles per hour.

REGISTRATION AND OPERATION

Registration and Operation

The bill authorizes the motor vehicle commissioner to issue a certificate of registration and marker plates to the owner or lessee of a neighborhood electric vehicle who applies for registration and meets the financial responsibility requirements of state law. By law, minimum levels of financial responsibility are \$20,000 for liability for death or personal injury to one person, \$40,000 for death or injury to more than one person, and \$10,000 for damage to property. It requires a registration applicant to pay a fee of \$18.

Although the bill specifies that the commissioner “may” issue registrations for these vehicles, it prohibits anyone from operating a neighborhood electric vehicle unless (1) he has a valid driver’s license or learner’s permit, (2) a registration certificate and automobile insurance card are carried on the vehicle and marker plates are displayed according to law, and (3) the vehicle is equipped according to various state requirements except insofar as these requirements are inapplicable to or inconsistent with the federal design and equipment standards for low speed vehicles. Thus, it appears that registration is mandatory if all requirements are met.

Applicable State Laws

The bill requires neighborhood electric vehicles to comply with the equipment requirements of CGS § 14-80 through 14-106c, to the extent they are consistent with the federal low speed vehicle standards. These laws cover, among other things, exhaust systems; ball joints and tie rod ends; brakes; hydraulic brake fluid; head and tail lamps; reflectors; stop lamps; light colors; sufficiency of head and rear lights; auxiliary lights; turn signals; fender, backup, and identification lamps; light intensity; tires; mirrors; windshields; tinted windows; use of safety glass; seat belts; fenders; video displays; air conditioning equipment; and tamper-resistant odometers.

Certificate of Title and Related Requirements

The commissioner must issue certificates of title for neighborhood

electric vehicles that have been issued a manufacturer's or importer's certificate of origin and a vehicle identification number. The bill also subjects these vehicles to the other statutory requirements for titled motor vehicles, including various fees such as the \$25 title application fee and the fees for noting and filing a security interest and searching title records.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Transportation Committee

Joint Favorable Report
Yea 19 Nay 9