



# Senate

General Assembly

**File No. 135**

February Session, 2006

Substitute Senate Bill No. 320

*Senate, March 27, 2006*

The Committee on Transportation reported through SEN. CIOTTO of the 9th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute 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 2006 supplement to  
2 the general statutes is amended by adding subdivision (100) as follows  
3 (*Effective October 1, 2006*):

4 (NEW) (100) "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, 2006*) (a) The Commissioner of  
13 Motor Vehicles may, on application in accordance with the provisions

14 of section 14-12 of the 2006 supplement to the general statutes and  
15 subject to the financial responsibility provisions of section 14-112 of the  
16 general statutes, issue a certificate of registration and marker plates to  
17 the owner or lessee of a neighborhood electric vehicle. The applicant  
18 shall pay the fee required under subsection (f) of section 14-49 of the  
19 general statutes. Such owner or lessee shall carry such registration and  
20 proof of financial responsibility in the vehicle and display marker  
21 plates as required by section 14-18 of the general statutes. The  
22 commissioner shall issue a certificate of title, pursuant to the  
23 provisions of chapter 247 of the general statutes, for each vehicle that  
24 has been issued a manufacturer's or importer's certificate of origin and  
25 vehicle identification number.

26 (b) Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, no individual  
27 may operate a neighborhood electric vehicle unless (1) the individual  
28 carries a valid motor vehicle operator's license or learner's permit, (2) a  
29 certificate of registration and automobile insurance identification card  
30 for the vehicle are carried in the motor vehicle and marker plates are  
31 displayed in accordance with the provisions of section 14-18 of the  
32 general statutes, issued pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, and  
33 (3) such vehicle is equipped in accordance with the requirements of  
34 sections 14-80 to 14-106c, inclusive, of the general statutes, except  
35 insofar as any requirement of said sections is inapplicable to or  
36 inconsistent with the design and equipment standards for low speed  
37 vehicles, as adopted by the National Highway Safety Traffic  
38 Administration in accordance with 49 CFR 571.000, as amended from  
39 time to time.

40 (c) No individual may operate a neighborhood electric vehicle  
41 unless (1) such individual owns, leases or has a contractual right to use  
42 such vehicle and such individual operates such vehicle on premises  
43 over which such individual or such individual's employer has control  
44 or a possessory interest, or on which such individual or such  
45 individual's employer has a contractual right to operate such vehicle,  
46 or (2) such vehicle is operated by such individual, identified in  
47 subdivision (1) of this subsection, across, by the shortest practicable

48 route, a highway with an established speed limit of no more than  
 49 thirty miles per hour that is on, or contiguous to, the premises of such  
 50 employer identified in subdivision (1) of this subsection, provided  
 51 such employer is a college or university, except that the traffic  
 52 authority of any municipality may limit or prohibit the operation of  
 53 neighborhood electric vehicles on any highway under the jurisdiction  
 54 of such local traffic authority.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	October 1, 2006	14-1(a)
Sec. 2	October 1, 2006	New section

**Statement of Legislative Commissioners:**

In subsection (b) of section 2, the words "Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section" were added for internal accuracy and the words "issued pursuant to subsection (a) of this section" were added for internal accuracy. In subsection (c) "person" and "person's" were changed to "individual" and "individual's" for accuracy and internal consistency.

**TRA**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*

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 07 \$	FY 08 \$
Department of Motor Vehicles	TF - See Below	See Below	See Below

Note: TF=Transportation Fund

**Municipal Impact:** None

**Explanation**

The bill subjects 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.

**The Out Years**

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

**OLR Bill Analysis****sSB 320*****AN ACT CONCERNING REGISTRATION AND USE OF CERTAIN LOW SPEED NEIGHBORHOOD VEHICLES.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill authorizes the operation of a “neighborhood electric vehicle” by someone who owns, leases, or has a contractual right to use it (1) on premises he or his employer owns, controls, or has a contractual right to operate upon or (2) if employed by a college or university, to cross by the shortest practical route certain highways that are contiguous to or on the educational institution’s property. A municipality’s legal traffic authority may, however, limit or prohibit their operation on any highway under its jurisdiction. 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 (1) authorizes the motor vehicle commissioner to issue registrations and plates for these vehicles, (2) requires him to issue certificates of title for them, (3) subjects owners and lessees to mandatory financial responsibility requirements, and (4) requires the driver to have a valid driver’s license or learner’s permit.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2006

**NEIGHBORHOOD ELECTRIC VEHICLES*****Definition***

The bill 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. They must meet

federal standards established for low speed vehicles under the regulations of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

***Applicable Federal Standards***

Federal 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.

**OPERATION**

To operate a neighborhood electric vehicle, the bill requires someone to own, lease, or have a contractual right to use it. Such a person may operate it (1) on premises over which he or his employer has control or possessory interest, or on which he or his employer has a contractual right to operate it or (2) to cross, by the shortest practicable route, a highway with an established speed limit of up to 30 miles per hour that is on, or contiguous to, such premises. This latter authority may only be exercised if the person's employer is a college or university.

**REGISTRATION**

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.

### **REQUIREMENTS TO OPERATE**

The bill prohibits someone 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.

### **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.

### **BACKGROUND**

#### ***Related Bill***

SB 410 increases the minimum levels of financial responsibility for operating motor vehicles in Connecticut from \$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 to \$25,000, \$50,000, and \$25,000 respectively.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Transportation Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 30 Nay 0 (03/13/2006)