



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Office of the
Commissioner

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**Public Hearing – February 9, 2009
Transportation Committee**

**Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Joseph F. Marie
Department of Transportation**

H.B. 5639 – An Act to Allow the Use of Golf Carts on Local Roads.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) offers the following comments on H.B. 5639, AA to Allow the Use of Golf Carts on Local Roads as well as the other bills on today's public hearing with similar provisions.

There are a number of bills that have been proposed this session to allow golf carts, low powered neighborhood electric vehicles, mini- vehicles, etc to operate on public roads. In general, the Department has been opposed to these bills because as written, they do not go far enough to ensure that this class of low speed vehicle does not cause safety and operational concerns.

From a safety perspective, the Department is concerned about the introduction of such low powered vehicles into the vehicular mix. Studies have shown that it is speed differential, i.e., varying speed among vehicles in the traffic stream which creates accident potential. From an operational perspective, the proposed legislation reviewed to date, has not adequately defined what the vehicle seeking access to the public roadway is. Depending on the vehicular dimensions and operating characteristics, the Department could have concerns regarding height, width, etc. Many of the proposed bills have not excluded night time operation or even specified that operators possess a driving license.

To address the safety concerns, the Department recommends the following provisions be addressed in any bill allowing low speed vehicle operation on public roads:

1. The allowable roads where low speed vehicles will be permitted shall have a speed limit of 25 mph or less;
2. Only licensed drivers be allowed to operate low speed vehicles;
3. Low speed vehicles will not be operated during hours of darkness unless vehicle lighting, subject to the approval of the Department of Motor Vehicles, is installed;
4. Low-speed vehicles are clearly defined; and
5. Local traffic authorities are given the ability to preclude low speed vehicles from particular roadways under their jurisdiction which cannot safely accommodate such vehicles' operation.