



STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES

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*Testimony of the Department of Motor Vehicles
Transportation Committee Public Hearing
February 9, 2009*

Proposed S.B. No. 683 AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE OPERATION OF REGISTERED GOLF CARTS ON PUBLIC ROADS

Proposed H.B. No. 5639 AN ACT TO ALLOW THE USE OF GOLF CARTS ON LOCAL ROADS

The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) recognizes and understands the Legislature's interest in permitting the use of golf carts on certain local roadways.

Current statute, namely §14-12(f), directs the Commissioner to refuse registration "for a motor vehicle or a class of motor vehicles if he determined that the characteristics of the motor vehicle or class of motor vehicles make it unsafe for highway operation." Further, the statute prohibits the Commissioner from registering any motor vehicle if he knows that the motor vehicle's equipment fails to comply with the provisions of Chapter 246 of the General Statutes.

As stated by the Connecticut Superior Court in its decision in East v. Labbe, 46 Conn. Supp. 24 (1998) (affirmed by both the Appellate Court and the Supreme Court), a golf cart is not eligible for registration as a motor vehicle. This is because it lacks numerous items of equipment that are required by various sections of Chapter 246. A golf cart also is unable to sustain the minimum speed required for an electric-powered, so-called "high mileage" motor vehicle, in accordance with § 14-303b-2 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. While our legislature has clearly stated, over the years, the basic purposes and standards for the issuance of registrations, it has also, from time-to-time, made certain exceptions, to permit certain vehicles that are not eligible for registration as a motor vehicle to be operated on public highways, for limited purposes and/or to a limited extent.

That being said, DMV has worked with Representative Guiliano and feels that the provisions in HB 5639 should be adopted in any "golf cart legislation", namely limits on the maximum speed of roads they may travel and the time of day they may be operated. DMV also believes that golf cart operation on roadways should be restricted to individuals who possess a valid driver's license. While SB 683, An Act Authorizing the Operation of Registered Golf Carts on Public Roads, seeks to achieve the same result, DMV fears the requirement to register golf carts could be costly and problematic.

Seat Belts Do Save Lives

DMV plans to provide additional testimony at an upcoming hearing on the other low speed vehicle bills the Committee is considering. We share the Department of Transportation's safety concerns and look forward to working with members of this Committee, as well as DOT, to address these issues.