
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 108

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

SUMMARY:

This bill requires “neighborhood electric vehicles” to be registered. It allows the motor vehicles commissioner to register and issue titles for such vehicles in accordance with the laws that apply to motor vehicles generally. By law, the commissioner can refuse to register or issue a title for a class of vehicles whose characteristics make such vehicles unsafe for highway operations (CGS § 14-12(f)). In practice, the Department of Motor Vehicles has not registered or issued titles for neighborhood electric vehicles.

The bill restricts the operation of such vehicles. Among other things, it requires the driver to carry a valid driver’s license or learner's permit and the vehicle to meet applicable state vehicle equipment requirements.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2014

NEIGHBORHOOD ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Definition

Under the bill, a neighborhood electric vehicle is one that:

1. has four-wheels;
2. is self-propelled,
3. is designed to carry passengers,
4. can reach a speed of at least 20 mph and no more than 25 mph on a paved, level surface; and
5. conforms with standards adopted for low-speed vehicles

adopted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), in accordance with applicable federal regulations, which establish equipment and testing requirements.

Registration and Title

The bill allows the commissioner to issue a registration and marker plates to the owner or lessee of a neighborhood electric vehicle. She must do so subject to the laws governing registration applications and demonstrating proof of financial responsibility (insurance) that apply to vehicles generally. The applicant must pay the \$19 registration fee that applies to electric vehicles.

The owner or lessee must carry the registration and proof of financial responsibility in the vehicle and display the marker plates as required by the laws that apply to other vehicles.

In addition, the commissioner must issue a certificate of title, under the laws that apply to other vehicles, for each vehicle that has been issued a manufacturer's or importer's certificate of origin and vehicle identification number.

Operations

To operate a neighborhood electric vehicle:

1. the driver must carry a valid driver's license or learner's permit;
2. a certificate of registration and automobile insurance identification card for the vehicle must be carried in the vehicle;
3. marker plates must displayed under the law that applies to vehicles generally; and
4. the vehicle must meet state vehicle equipment requirements, which include lighting and brake requirements among other things, except to the extent these requirements are inapplicable to or inconsistent with the NHTSA design and equipment standards for low-speed vehicles.

A neighborhood electric vehicle may be operated on a highway only

if its speed limit is no more than 35 mph. But the vehicle can cross a highway, at an intersection, that has higher speed limit.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Energy and Technology Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 19 Nay 4 (03/18/2014)