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Senate Bill 961 (as introduced 2-3-00)
Sponsor: Senator Bill Bullard, Jr.
Committee: Transportation and Tourism

Date Completed: 2-29-00

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to establish an eight-hour deadline for the removal of abandoned vehicles from a State trunk line highway; require a study to be conducted on the impact of this time limit; and, increase the normal length maximum of a single vehicle that may be operated on a highway in the State.

Abandoned Vehicle

Currently, if a vehicle has remained on public or private property for a period of time so that it appears to a police agency that the vehicle is abandoned, the police must determine if the vehicle has been reported stolen and affix to the vehicle a written notice that contains certain information, including the date and time the vehicle may be taken into custody and stored at the owner's expense or scrapped if the vehicle is not removed. If the vehicle is not removed within 48 hours after the date the notice was affixed, the vehicle is considered abandoned and the police agency may have the vehicle taken into custody. The bill would add that if the vehicle were not removed within eight hours after the date the notice was affixed in the case of a State trunk line highway, the vehicle would be considered abandoned and could be taken into custody.

The bill would require the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) to conduct a study in cooperation with the State Department of Transportation and the Department of State Police to evaluate the impact on the change from 48 hours to eight hours, as described above. The bill also would require that SEMCOG submit the study's findings and recommendations to the Secretary of State within 12 months after the bill's effective date.

The bill would revise the definition of "abandoned vehicle" to include a vehicle that had remained on a State trunk line highway for a period of eight hours, after a police agency or other governmental agency designated by the policy agency had affixed a written notice to the vehicle. (Currently, "abandoned vehicle" means a vehicle that has remained on public or private property for a period of 48 hours after the written notice has been affixed.)

Vehicle Length

The Code establishes a normal length maximum for vehicles operated on a highway in the State, and prohibits any single vehicle in excess of 40 feet from being operated on a State highway. The bill would increase this normal length maximum to 45 feet.

Under the Code, "length" means the total length of a vehicle, or combination of vehicles, including any load the vehicle is carrying. "Length" does not include safety and energy conservation devices such as impact absorbing bumpers, rear view mirrors, turn signal lamps, marker lamps, steps and hand holds for entry and egress, flexible fender extensions, mud flaps, or splash and spray suppressant devices; load induced tire bulge, refrigeration or heating units; or air compressors attached to the vehicle. The bill also would exclude a dolly converter from the determination of length if the distance from the front vertical plane or the foremost section of the dolly to the front of the semitrailer did not exceed 18 inches.

The bill also would delete the definition of “articulated buses”.

MCL 257.252a & 257.719

Legislative Analyst: L. Arasim

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have a negligible fiscal impact on State and local government. It is assumed that the study required under the bill could be completed with the existing resources of the State Departments of Transportation and State Police and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments.

Fiscal Analyst: B. Baker

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.