

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESB 6316

As Passed House - Amended:

March 7, 2002

Title: An act relating to electric personal assistive mobility devices.

Brief Description: Regulating electric personal assistive mobility devices.

Sponsors: By Senators Kastama, Horn, Prentice, Johnson, Eide, Finkbeiner, McCaslin, McDonald, Swecker, Jacobsen, Fairley, Oke, Costa, Thibaudeau, Morton and Benton.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 3/4/02 [DPA].

Floor Activity:

Passed House - Amended: 3/7/02, 91-2.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill (As Amended by House)

- Electric personal assistive mobility devices (EPAMDs) are defined.
- Operators of EPAMDs have all the rights and duties of pedestrians except they must obey all speed limits and must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians and human powered devices at all times.
- Municipalities may regulate EPAMDs on highways where the speed limit is greater than 25 mph or in areas with congested pedestrian or nonmotorized traffic.
- State agencies or local governments may also regulate EPAMD operation within recreation areas.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 24 members: Representatives Fisher, Chair; Cooper, Vice Chair; Lovick, Vice Chair; Mitchell, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Ericksen, Haigh, Hankins, Hatfield, Holmquist, Jackley, Jarrett, Mielke, Morell, Murray, Ogden, Reardon, Rockefeller, Romero, Schindler, Skinner, Sullivan, Wood and Woods.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Simpson.

Staff: Penny Nerup (786-7335).

Background:

Segway is a brand of electronic personal assistive mobility devices (EPAMD) that maintains balance through use of gyroscopes and tilt sensors, software and circuit boards, and high-powered electric motors. The consumer model of the Segway travels at speeds up to 12.5 miles per hour, goes up to 17 miles on a single electric charge, can carry passengers who weigh up to 250 pounds, and has an unloaded weight of about 80 pounds.

Currently, the terms Segway and EPAMD are inter-changeable.

Summary of Amended Bill:

EPAMDs are defined as self-balancing two-wheeled devices with an electric propulsion system designed to transport one person. The maximum speed on a paved level surface, when ridden by an operator who weighs 170 pounds, is less than 20 miles per hour.

EPAMDs are: 1) not subject to vehicle lighting and other equipment requirements; 2) not required to have a certificate of ownership; and 3) not subject to vehicle licensing requirements.

EPAMD operators: 1) are not required to have a driver's license; 2) are allowed on bike paths and sidewalks; 3) have all the rights and duties of a pedestrian, except that operators must obey all speed limits and must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians and human powered devices; and 4) must give an audible signal before overtaking and passing a pedestrian.

Municipalities and the Department of Transportation may prohibit operation of an EPAMD on public highways where the speed limit is greater than 25 miles per hour. Municipalities can also restrict the speed of an EPAMD where there is congested pedestrian or nonmotorized traffic or where there is a significant speed differential between pedestrians, nonmotorized traffic and EPAMDs. Although municipalities can regulate where EPAMDS can be used, municipalities are specifically prohibited from restricting the speed of an EPAMD in an entire community or in places where there is infrequent pedestrian traffic.

State agencies and local jurisdictions can regulate use of EPAMDS on trails, wetlands or areas used for recreation.

The Legislature is required to review the provisions of this act and make any necessary changes by July 2005.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Segway is an innovation in transportation, an engineering marvel. This device will provide mobility for the disabled and the elderly.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Kastama, prime sponsor; and Lisa Thatcher, Segway.