

Transportation Committee

HB 1581

Brief Description: *Revising provisions for licensing of motor vehicle dealers and manufacturers.*

Sponsors: *Representatives Cooper, Haigh, Morell, Hankins, Rockefeller and Delvin; by request of Department of Licensing.*

Brief Summary of Bill

- *Authorizes the Department of Licensing to monitor and regulate the lease practices of vehicle dealers and manufacturers.*

Hearing Date: *2/14/01*

Staff: *Reema Griffith (786-7301).*

Background:

Currently, the Department of Licensing (DOL) has the authority to monitor and regulate the business and sales practices of licensed vehicle dealers. Part of the department's responsibility in regulating dealers is to investigate complaints filed by customers. After conducting an investigation, if the department finds a dealer to be in violation of current regulations, the department may issue a correction notice, assess a fine, or suspend or revoke their license.

If the department receives a customer complaint related specifically to a lease agreement, current law does not explicitly authorize the department to regulate or monitor lease agreements. This fact notwithstanding, the department has historically investigated lease complaints which have been done with dealer consent and cooperation. However, because this practice is not specifically authorized in statute, it could be questioned and challenged if so desired. With vehicle leasing becoming a very popular option with the general public, it is likely that there will also be an increase in lease complaints filed with the DOL, thus the need for clarification on regulatory authority.

Summary of Bill:

In order to clarify the DOL's authority as it relates to regulating and monitoring vehicle lease practices of auto dealers, the word lease- is added throughout Chapter 46.70 (Dealers and Manufacturers-) to be included with current authority over vehicle sales.

In order to save time and money, language is added authorizing the DOL to electronically transmit the vehicle dealer manual, which is provided to dealers when they initially license their business and when they renew their license, if any revisions or updates have occurred.

In an effort to ensure that a dealer is both registered and in good standing with the Department of Revenue (DOR), language is added which authorizes the DOL to suspend or revoke a dealer's business license if the dealer does not have a current certificate or registration with the DOR.

Technical amendments are made to gender neutralize current language.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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